

The  
Converted Actor

*By E. H. B.*



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Mr Marshall.  
With best wishes.  
From  
Nov 1899. ~~4~~ C. H. Bennett

Blessed are the dead, that die, in the Lord

## P R E F A C E .

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**THERE** are still thousands who can remember a remarkable man whose voice was often heard in past years preaching the "Gospel of God" from the platforms of theatres, public-halls, Bible-carriages, and at race-courses, and sea-side resorts, in these British isles, with marked success.

His name was JOHN HAMBLETON, generally known as the **CONVERTED ACTOR**.

There was something in his fervid eloquence, something in the intense pathos with which he preached "THE OLD, OLD STORY," and told about "THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST," that arrested his hearers' attention, and left such deep and lasting impressions upon their minds that many have told the writer of this, after the lapse of twenty-five years, and spoken of his resemblance to that "Herald of Christ," who was referred to as a "BURNING AND SHINING LIGHT."

But it was not only his gift of oratory consecrated to the service of God, and the intense earnestness and interest that was infused into all his discourses, but those who knew him most intimately were aware that, in connection with this bold and devoted servant of Christ, there had been a long and remarkable career of prodigal life, during which he wandered in foreign lands, and passed through a variety of strange experiences as an actor, theatrical manager; also a gold-digger and adventurer, all of which combined to form a history of deepest interest, which demonstrates the fact that

**"TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN FICTION."**

As one that was privileged to know this evangelist, and to have heard from his lips most of these interesting narratives, also to have before me an extensive diary of the leading parts of his eventful life, I am persuaded to yield to many appeals that this shall be published "for the glory of God" and profit of our readers.

Also with a sincere desire that a perusal of the following pages may lead others to a "knowledge of salvation by the remission of their sins," and that *thus* they may "know HIM, whom to know is eternal life."

It is not to exalt the creature, but rather to magnify "the exceeding riches of God's grace," re-echoing and illustrating the glorious truth that "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

Also to show that man's worst crimes do not change God's love, nor hinder the flow of His sovereign grace, which meets the deepest, direst need of that "world of sinners lost and ruined by the fall."

The narrative will further glorify God by showing that believers "can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth us." For the **CONVERTED ACTOR** proved the truth of the Divine words, "My grace is sufficient for thee," and "My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Therefore, "Unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever." Amen.

E. H. B.

# The Converted Actor.

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## THE PRODIGAL'S STORY.

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THE first occasion when we heard "THE CONVERTED ACTOR" refer to these incidents of his past life, was in a music hall in Cardiff, many years ago, when a crowd of people had assembled in the *boxes, pit, and galleries*, to hear evangelistic addresses.

A previous speaker had referred to the wonderful providential dealings of God with himself, and how to divert him from a career of sin and folly, as he was going *down* upon

### THE JERICHO ROAD

which leads to misery and eternal destruction, the Lord had sometimes "hedged up his way with thorns," and sometimes "bound him with cords of affliction and adversity," all designed to humble his proud spirit, and bring him to that point in the Prodigal's experience, where "he came to himself," and said, "I will arise and go to my Father, and will say, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee."

Following this, we remember well how John Hambleton came forward upon the platform, and in words of solemn pathos gave an outline of the leading events of his chequered life—in substance, as follows:

"It is not often that I feel at liberty to speak of that course of sin and folly which occupied so many years of my early life, when I did what seemed right in my own eyes, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, as I rioted in sinful pleasure.

"But the allusions that have been made to God's sovereign grace, which is displayed in saving '*the devil's castaways*,' prompts me to tell you some of His wonderful dealings with myself.

"In doing this, I desire only to magnify Him in the inspired words, 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out.'

### YOUTHFUL DAYS.

"Anyone passing through the streets of Liverpool many years ago might have seen a lad of barely fourteen summers, whose careless, defiant manners told a sad tale of self-will and rebellion from his parent's authority, that gave saddest evidence of the fact that he had sunk deeper in the mire of sin than boys of that age are generally found in.

"That lad was none other than he, who is now about to tell you part of the story of a prodigal's chequered history, blurred and blotted with sins of crimson dye, ere God, in richest grace, plucked me as a brand from the burning."

### A MOTHER'S INFLUENCE.

"For the sake of encouraging Christian parents to 'pray without ceasing' for their children's conversion, and to spare no pains to LEAD THEM TO CHRIST as their Saviour in early days, and BY EXAMPLE AND PRECEPT, to show them that 'GOD'S WAYS are pleasantness and His paths are peace,' which drop the fatness of heaven's blessing upon all who walk therein, according to Psalm i. and Prov. iii., iv. Also to warn them of THE OLD WAY that wicked men have trodden, who were cut down out of time, having said unto God, 'depart from us': see Job xxii. 15. I would refer to the enduring influence of home training

on the characters and lives of every one of us.

“During those sixteen years of my prodigal life, when I travelled through Australia and America as a stage-actor and gold-digger, mixing up with every kind of evil society, I never forgot the teaching and consistent life of my God-fearing mother. It was not through any neglect of hers that I so early forsook the paths of virtue, and plunged into dissipation and vice. With tenderest care she taught those things belonging to my peace, and begged me to ‘seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness,’ and to bind God’s law upon my heart and tie it about my neck, that it might preserve me from evil, and be a ‘lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.’

“At her feet I learned to lisp that precious name of JESUS, which I have since proved

“Makes the wounded spirit whole,  
And calms the troubled breast;  
’Tis manna to the hungry soul,  
And to the weary rest.”

And about whom I now love to preach as

Jehovah, the Saviour, who  
Eternally  
Saves  
Us  
Sinners.

And who is the alpha and omega of all God’s revelations in the Scriptures of truth.

“I shall never forget the lovely way she used to place her hand upon my head, and talk about that peerless Person who was ‘God manifest in the flesh,’ and ‘who though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor that ye, through His poverty, might be rich.’

“How that *by nature* and *by practice* we were all ‘born in sin,’ and going astray from God from our youth, ‘led

captive by the devil,' with hearts so deceitful and desperately wicked that we were ready to do all the things spoken of in Romans I., II. That, when we were in this lost and ruined condition, at enmity with God, He so loved us 'that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'

"This would open up the great question of RUIN and REDEMPTION, about which she was careful to instruct me from God's Holy Word.

"When I asked her the meaning of those words in John iii. 16, '*shall not perish*,' she used to explain to me that 'the wages of sin is death.' That 'God is righteous in all His ways and holy in all His works'; therefore, 'every transgression and disobedience must receive its just recompense of reward.' 'Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.' 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die.' 'It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.' And so I learnt that DEATH was the PENALTY incurred by our sins and rebellion against the authority of God, and that there was only one way of escape from the awful doom of that SECOND DEATH described in Rev. xx., where the terrible reality of the word PERISH will be understood by the impenitent. And that was Christ 'dying for the ungodly,' 'tasting death for every man,' 'bearing our sins in His own body on the tree,' being 'wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities,' thus redeeming us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.

## THE INFLUENCE OF BAD COMPANIONS.

"I have cause to remember the wanderings and des-



perate wickedness of my early life when I was drawn into sin by evil companions, and breaking away from home restraints, drifted into the open stream of iniquity.

"I got mixed up with young men who made me familiar with drinking, gambling, swearing, and the degrading influence of the circus, theatre, public-house, billiard-room, and race-course, so that *down* I went on that 'JERICHO ROAD,' where thousands of young men, who forget the warnings of the Bible, have 'fallen among thieves,' and been stripped of their characters, money, health, and all, and left half dead in the ditch of their own corruption.

"I think it well to refer only in these *general terms* to, that period of about sixteen years after I ran away from home, and entered upon *the theatrical profession*, where I found every facility for the indulgence of sinful pursuits. During that time I was often tormented by a guilty conscience, and reminded of the fact that 'THE END OF THESE THINGS IS DEATH,' and 'AFTER THIS THE JUDGMENT.' But I always tried to drown these convictions in intoxicating drinks, and what the world has misnamed *pleasure*.

"Amongst my theatrical friends I found plenty of INFIDELS, who very freely expressed their opinions as to there being *no God, no heaven, and no hell*. Therefore, their maxim was the same as *fools* of former times, 'Let us eat, and drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die.'

"But, as my conscience had been rightly instructed by a Christian mother, it gave the lie to all their plausible but delusive arguments, so that the words in Psalm cxxxix., 'Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?' were awfully real to me in those years of my prodigal wanderings.

"Parents who are often distressed by the wayward conduct of self-willed children should take courage from what I now say as to the lasting impressions *graven upon my*

*soul* by the example and teaching of a Christian mother who 'died in the faith' before my conversion.

### ENCOURAGEMENT FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS AND PARENTS.

"Let such as are engaged in the important work of training children never become weary in well-doing, but continue 'stedfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'

"God's word is ever blessedly true, that 'They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.' And that 'He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.'

"Therefore, 'Cast thy bread on the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days.' 'In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this, or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.' And to this we may add the words of our blessed Lord who said, 'He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both he that soweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together.' Furthermore, 'Paul planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase'; 'And everyone shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.'

### MY FIRST AWAKENING.

"When I was about thirty years of age I was residing in Geelong, Australia, pursuing the calling of an actor, and managing a theatre of my own. All my associates were of that class of careless beings who regard pleasure as the chief end of human existence, and utterly ignore the claims of God as Creator and Redeemer.

“Our days and nights were spent in the vain pursuit of things that for the time being gratified ‘the lust of the flesh, and of the eyes, and the pride of life.’ Ever proving the truth of Sacred Writ, ‘He who drinketh of this water shall thirst again.’ And of what Solomon said, concerning all things UNDER THE SUN, ‘Behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit, and there is no profit.’ Indeed, they are only like ‘the crackling of thorns under the pot,’ and ‘the end of these things is death.’

### A CRISIS IN MY HISTORY.

“Some stage actors, with their gay companions, were, spending a convivial evening together, when one of them, whose father was an infidel, gave expression to some coarse and blasphemous remarks against the Bible, ridiculing it as an invention of cunning priests.

There was no lack of sympathy with his remarks, because men who live for the indulgence of their appetites in sinful pursuits are only too anxious to FORGET GOD, and to persuade themselves to doubt the solemn truths unfolded in the Holy Scriptures relating to

MAN’S TOTAL DEPRAVITY AND RUIN.

GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS.

REDEMPTION, THROUGH THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.

HIS RESURRECTION, FOR THE BELIEVER’S JUSTIFICATION.

REGENERATION, BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

REMISSION OF SINS.

RECONCILIATION THROUGH FAITH IN HIS NAME.

RETRIBUTION FOR THE IMPENITENT.

“But in my own heart I believed every doctrine of the Christian faith, though I was a rejector of CHRIST, and neglecter of God’s great salvation. •

“Therefore, when my companions joined that young infidel in his scornful remarks against the Christian faith, I seemed to forget that I was their associate in sin, as we caroused together in the drinking and gambling saloon ;

and my spirit was moved by a higher power to turn upon them and rebuke their blasphemy.

"In the face of plausible infidel reasonings, and the bitter satire of 'men of the world, who have their portion in this life,' I had always felt a reverence for that SACRED BOOK which was associated with a godly mother, to whom its precepts and promises were 'better than thousands of silver and gold,' and also 'sweeter than honey, or the honey-comb.'"

### THE MEMORY OF A CHRISTIAN MOTHER.

All of us know that with many RELIGION is but an empty profession, associated with the outward observances of rites and ceremonies, and church and chapel-going on Sundays, all of which may be only *dead works* which leave the soul dark and miserable. So that mere Bible-reading, psalm-singing, or prayers, *under such circumstances*, are little more than formalism, degenerating into *irksome duty*, failing to commend "THE GOSPEL OF THE HAPPY GOD" to children or others around us.

But not so was it with the mother of John Hambleton. Concerning her, he used to say that her "*Christianity* was *living* and *real*, because THE CHRIST of the Scriptures was known as her *Redeemer, Saviour, Lord, High Priest, Example, and Hope*, and she sought His grace *day by day* to live out the grand principles of the Bible, "so that, "by the manifestation of the truth," by the practical reality of her faith in God, and "respect unto all His statutes and ordinances," she "walked with God" in her home life, and thus impressed her children with the "blessedness of those who make the Lord their trust," and prove Him to be "an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

What an unspeakable blessing it is, therefore, for all of us to be proving in every station in life

“What a friend we have in Jesus,  
All our sins and griefs to bear;  
What a privilege to carry,  
Everything to God in prayer.”

With all these facts impressed upon his soul, John Hambleton felt the hollowness of all the sophistry of his sceptical friends, and at every point in his experience was confronted with the unanswerable evidence furnished in that LIVING EPISTLE—A Christian mother's life, whose words and acts had spoken to his heart in the early years of childhood.

It is true that the long course of sin he had pursued weakened its influence, but it was never obliterated from his soul, so that when those drinking companions assailed his mother's Bible he turned upon them, and defended it so far as he was able, mainly insisting on the fact that its holy mysteries were beyond the comprehension of their depraved minds, and that those who were guided by its precepts, and cheered by its promises, were better off in time, and would surely be better off in eternity than such fools as they were, who lived only for the enjoyment of fleeting pleasures.

## A REVERIE ON THE SEA SHORE.

When the company parted that night, his companions went to their lodgings, and probably soon forgot the strange scene they had witnessed in that drinking saloon, of hearing the tragedian and theatrical manager defending the Bible. But his own spirit was so much troubled that there seemed little prospect of sleep. He, therefore, wandered through “the bush” and along the sea shore whilst the chords of memory were touched by the Spirit

of God, and many of the events of childhood passed in review before his mind with wondrous reality, until he felt a solemn consciousness that GOD was near, and began to realise the sense of his own depravity and need.

Describing that eventful night he said :—" I shall never forget the hours spent 'ALONE WITH GOD' as I roamed along the shore, and my spirit seemed awakening to hear His voice reminding me of the fact that, 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.' Everything in nature around me possessed a charm peculiar to those tropical climes. Language would fail to describe the beauties of such a landscape and sea-view as met my gaze on that memorable night, when I heard the voice of God speaking to my hardened soul, and, like Manasseh of old, began to realise that 'the Lord He is God.' As I lifted my eyes and saw the full moon shedding upon me its soft, mellow light, and the clustering stars in the firmament above, which seemed to fix their tiny eyes upon me—the weary prodigal, a voice within seemed to enquire, 'Who made those planets you are gazing upon, and what power created and sustains all the sublime mechanism of the universe?' The tiniest flower, and even the blades of grass and shrubs, seemed to speak of an Infinite Creator, and to shame all the boastings of science and philosophy. As I watched the fruit trees they seemed to ask me 'Who causes our branches and buds to blossom? Who sends the rain and fruitful seasons which fill men's hearts with food and gladness.' Everything thus in nature seemed to have a voice to my soul, and prove the existence of that Supreme Being whose glorious attributes are unfolded in the Scriptures of Truth.

"Filled with this new awe and reverence begotten *within*

me, I reached the sea shore, and again paused to admire the scene.

"Before me was stretched the beautiful Bay of Geelong, looking like a mirror in the silvery light. The waves rolled in over the strand, and fell in spray at my feet, leading my troubled spirit to further reflections upon the wisdom and beneficence of HIM 'who has not left Himself without witness,' even to people in distant heathen lands, who day and night have spread before them these proofs of 'His eternal power and God-head,' which leave them 'without excuse.'

"Every hour's experience during that memorable night forced upon my soul the conviction that 'GOD IS THE CREATOR AND SOVEREIGN LORD OF ALL.' For the deep consciousness that 'In Him we live, and move, and have our being,' was then impressed upon my soul.

"Without doubt the Holy Spirit was thus leading me into a new experience, bringing to my remembrance texts of Scripture learnt in my infancy, but long forgotten, and thus shedding beams of heavenly light into my benighted soul.

"These were some of the marvellous links in the chain of God's providential dealings with me, that were used to turn my feet from paths of sin and folly into 'His ways of pleasantness and His paths of peace.'

### A BED THAT WAS TOO SHORT FOR A MAN.

"He who had thus begun a good work in my soul was not likely to leave it imperfect, therefore, you will not be surprised to hear that when I returned to my hotel in the early hours of that eventful morning and retired to bed, I began to learn in my soul's experiences the meaning of that singular passage of Scripture, 'The bed is shorter than a man can stretch himself on, and the covering

narrower than he can wrap himself in': Isa. xxviii. 20.

"The history of poor sinful man in all his wanderings from God, in those ways that are evidence of his folly, is proof positive that he can find nothing '*under the sun*' wherein his weary, heavy-laden soul can get REST, apart from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and 'the knowledge of salvation by the remission of our sins.'"

If this meets the eye of any who have *vainly* been trying to get *rest* for the wounded spirit, or *joy* and *peace* for the heart and conscience, in anything else than Redemption through Christ's blood, "even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace," let me entreat you to note with care the experience through which this troubled soul passed before he entered into the joy and peace of God's great salvation.

One feature of the powerful preaching in later years of *The Converted Actor* was, that faithful *ploughing up of the sinner's conscience* by dealing with true facts in relation to *man's ruin, God's righteousness, Redemption through the Blood of the Cross, Regeneration by the Holy Spirit, through faith in God's Word, and Eternal Retribution for those who neglect or reject God's great Salvation.*

With "demonstration of the Spirit and power," he thus declared ALL the counsels of God, leading convicted sinners to cry, "What must I do to be saved?" and then pointing them to "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world," declaring that SALVATION is still, by grace and through faith, "it is the gift of God."

If any preacher, since the days of Whitfield and Wesley, was used of God to awaken sinners to the reality of their danger and need, and lead them to desire to "*flee from the wrath to come,*" and be *saved* from that penalty of their sins, even the "second death" described in Rev. xx.,



if anyone ever showed that THE BED of all man's religiousness and *so-called* good works was too short for him to lie upon, and *that covering* altogether too narrow to hide the sin and corruption of *his state by nature*, it was dear John Hambleton whose memory and faithful ministry we love to recall.

Such shallow and sentimental preaching as seems to be gaining currency in these days, found no favour with that Spirit-taught evangelist, who derived his instruction from the fountain of Divine truth, the Bible, and believed not in "healing the wounds of the people *lightly*," neither would he tolerate those "false guides and teachers" who cry, "Peace, Peace, when there is no peace."

He had learnt that "God is LIGHT" as well as LOVE. That He is a "consuming fire," "Righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works." Therefore, "He can by no means spare the guilty," but "every transgression and disobedience shall receive its just recompense of reward."

Therefore God could only meet poor sinful, guilty man upon *redemption ground*, as set forth in Rom. iii. v. x., which was the grand theme of this evangelist in preaching *the Gospel of God*. How incomparably precious are the sentiments expressed in the hymn :

"No, not the *love*, without the  
*blood*,

That were to me no love at all;  
It could not reach my sinful soul,  
Nor hush the fears that me  
appal.

"I need the love, I need the blood,  
I need the grace, the cross, the  
grave;

I need the resurrection power,  
A soul like mine to purge and  
save.

"The LOVE I need is RIGHTEOUS  
LOVE  
Inscribed on the sin-bearing tree,

LOVE that exacts the sinner's debt,  
Yet in exacting sets him free.

"LOVE that condemns the sinner's  
sin,  
Yet in condemning pardon seals;  
That saveth him from RIGHTEOUS  
WRATH,  
Yet saving, RIGHTEOUSNESS  
reveals.

"LOVE, boundless, as Jehovah's  
self,  
LOVE, holy as His righteous  
law;

LOVE, unsolicited, unbought,  
The LOVE proclaimed on Gol-  
gotha.

"THIS is the LOVE that calms my heart,

That soothes each conscious pang within,

That pacifies my guilty dread,  
And frees me from the power of sin.

"The LOVE that blotteth out each stain,

That plucketh hence each deadly sting,

That fills me with the peace of God,

Unseals my lips, and bids me sing.

"The LOVE that liberates and saves,

That this poor straitened soul expands;

That lifts me to the heaven of heavens,

The shrine above, not made with hands.

"The LOVE that quickens into zeal,

That makes me self-denied and true;

That brings me out of what is old,

And brings me into what is new.

"That purifies, and cheers, and calms,

That knows no change and no decay;

The LOVE that loves for evermore,

Celestial sunshine, endless day."

Thank God for all preachers who are *holding forth* these glorious doctrines of our "common salvation," and who, like John Hambleton, "build for eternity," according to I. Cor. iii.

How blessed to sing thus:

"My hope is built on nothing less,  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness; . . .  
On Christ, the solid rock I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand."

### "THOU SCAREST ME WITH DREAMS."

Turning back again to the Actor's experience during that eventful night in Geelong, he has told me that he then realised something of the meaning of those words recorded in Job. vii. 14, which were brought home to him with intense reality as he lay upon his bed with the arrow of conviction in his soul.

It is many years since I heard him relate that awful dream, but all is vividly impressed upon my memory, and the following has been revised by himself:

Said he: "As I tossed about on my sleepless pillow, memories of home came thronging around me. Bitter

recollections of all my misdeeds in the past were rushing through my mind with intense and burning imagery, which drove me to the verge of distraction. I thought of the kind mother and friends I had left in England, of the sinful life I had been leading, and for the gratification of which I had sacrificed all that was noble and good. At last I fell into a deep slumber, and then experienced those other words found in Job xxxiii. 14-28: 'God speaketh once, yea, twice; yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed, then He openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that He may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. Yea, He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.' "

"This," said John Hambleton, "was truly verified in my soul's experience, as

FORMER SCENES IN MY CHEQUERED LIFE  
passed liked a panorama before my mental vision.

"The first thing recalled to my astonished memory was *myself* playing the part of an actor in St. James' Street, Liverpool. Arrayed in the kingly robes of Richard the Third, I was seated upon a rostrum. My brother Isaac (who was taken away by the cholera which raged in Liverpool during the year 1832), seemed to be again alive, and, in vision, I again saw him dressed as 'Pan' in heathen mythology as the God of Shepherds, with a crook in his hand, and clothed in rags, he stood in St. James' churchyard, myself seated upon the opposite side. He was instructing me in the mysteries of nature, showing that every complete thing, whether animal or vegetable, was, in its own sphere, like a world in itself, with other forms of life feeding upon it, and that in this particular way everything seemed to be feeding upon everything, and that as

all things came from the earth, so the earth itself was feeding upon her offspring.

"As these strange things passed in review before me *in my dreams*, I ventured to ask him some questions as to the soul of man, when he proceeded to show me a man who had put off the mortal coil, and whose body had crumbled to dust. But there was manifestly a distinct existence of *the soul*, which was to live for ever and for ever.

"Many things were said to me *in vision* as I stood by the side of that open grave, and the awful realities of *eternity* began to dawn upon my awe-stricken mind.

"Amongst the things that I can most distinctly remember was a vision of *my mother*, having the same features, but *clothed upon* with a body of unspeakable glory, and surrounded with an innumerable company, all clad in robes that had been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. The scene passing before me seemed to be an expression of that *joy* which is unspeakable and full of glory. I felt a desire to become a sharer of such bliss, and would have lingered upon that enchanted ground. But a change seemed to come over my dream as if the curtain dropped upon my vision, and there was

#### A TRANSFORMATION SCENE

which struck my soul with awe as I looked upon everything 'shrouded with the blackness of darkness.' Horrors seized my soul as I thus saw myraids of lost enduring the anguish of that SECOND DEATH, in connection with which the Bible declares, 'Whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire': Rev. xx. 10, 15. And the terrible doom of such impenitent ones must surely be to 'drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of His indignation, and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the

presence of the Lamb, and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day and night,'": see Rev. xiv. 10, 11; xvi. 8, 29.

Said he: "I was so terrified with this dream that my body was bathed in perspiration when I woke, and for many days I felt restrained from going back to my former sinful ways. But as yet there was no true 'repentance towards God'; no submission to His righteous judgment upon me as a hell-deserving sinner; no exercise of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and, therefore, no knowledge of my salvation, and no power to resist the temptation of the drinking saloon, and the associations of my evil life."

Speaking to the writer some years after his conversion he made a remark to this effect:—"If you know anyone who doubts the reality of that HELL to which all go 'whose names are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life,' send them to me and I'll tell them what I saw of it in vision that awful night, and if *that* was so terrible, surely *the reality* must be incomparably worse, and accounts for the words in Luke xvi. 27, 31: 'I pray the that thou wilt send him to my father's house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.'"

If this should meet the eye of any who have been deluded with man's theories of "A LARGER HOPE," let me beg also that you be warned by the unanswerable words of the Lord Jesus, who said, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins. . . . Whither I go ye cannot come" (John viii. 21, 24); and to remember that *unbelievers* "shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Also "the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our

Lord Jesus Christ " (2 Thess. i. 7, 8).

Man's theories may sound very plausible, and are too readily accredited by those who hate the Gospel of free grace, and redemption through the blood of the Lamb. But the question has never yet been answered, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" And God's Word stands for ever sure, "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 36). Reader, ponder also the words in John iii. 16, "Shall never perish."

So that THE CONVERTED ACTOR was accustomed to warn sinners to "Flee from the wrath to come," and to declare that, if they despised the riches of God's grace in the Gospel of our salvation, they would find that there was no plank floating in the eternal sea by which a lost soul could at any time reach the heavenly shore, and they must, therefore, be the subjects of *the righteous judgment of God*. which is according to truth: see Rom. ii. 2, 5.

Proceeding to narrate the closing scenes in his Australian career. John Hambleton said that, after his defence of the Christian religion in the drinking saloon at Geelong, and the awe that rested upon him in consequence of this dream, he felt like a speckled bird amongst his comrades, and he longed for a change. Hearing much talk about the discovery of new gold-fields in California, he was induced to join a party of adventurers who were determined to *try their luck* in that far-distant land.

#### OFF TO CALIFORNIA.

"In the company of a careless, godless lot of men," he said, "I started from Australia, and soon forgot my *religious impressions*, and drifted back into my old gambling, drinking, and sinful ways. That awful voyage over, we reached San Francisco, and moored safely in its beauti-

ful harbour, which was then filled with a large fleet of ships which had brought emigrants of every costume and tongue, who had been drawn by the same *gold fever* that had brought our party from the South Pacific. It was a never-to-be-forgotten sight to look upon that harbour and crowded city, and to watch Chinamen, Spaniards, French, Dutch, Mexicans, Russians, and English huddled together in canvas tents, and ready-made wooden houses, which American speculators had brought there, and sold at an enormous profit to these greedy emigrants. Wooden hotels were brought *in parts* from the States, and fixed up with amazing celerity, and money was freely spent in drink, gambling, and vice. Every heart seemed to be filled with avarice and dissipation, and one idol, like Nebuchadnezzar's image, towered above every other object in those plains of California; even that MAMMON, for which those crowds of deluded worshippers rushed off, through rough and muddy roads, *to dig or die*.

"Careless of fatigue, hunger, and disappointment, we pursued our way over wild and desolate tracts of country, where nothing met the eye but vast prairies, from which there arose immense mountains, capped with snow, and slopes that were wooded with trees of enormous growth. Of course, we had to endure many hardships, and often to suffer the pangs of hunger, thirst, fever, and fatigue, to say nothing of peril of robbers, and the rowdyism of some desperate characters in our own party. But what did we care for all this so long as we could reach the point of our ambition and find the precious *gold* upon which our sordid hearts were set.

#### A REFLECTION FOR CHRISTIANS.

"As I look back upon that experience and view it from a Christian standpoint, I am bound to say that it suggests such thoughts as these :—' If men of the world, for the love

of adventure and the acquirement of their heart's ambition, will endure such privations as these, how much self-denial and enduring of hardness should characterise God's redeemed people who are called to follow Christ and His apostles, whose noble works of faith and labours of love are recorded in the Scriptures of Truth? Should those who are debtors to Divine grace, and are not their own, but 'bought with a price,' begrudge time, toil, or labour in laying up treasures in heaven? If Mammon's cross is cheerfully borne, should not Christ's be? It is indeed high time that Christians 'should awake out of sleep,' and respond to the claims of Divine love and grace, else the very conduct of God's enemies will put them to shame.

### NEW EXPERIENCES IN CALIFORNIA.

"I can only give a general outline of my experiences on the Pacific Coast, most of which I spent near the Coloma river as a prodigal amongst the swinish citizens of that far-off country, who occupied their leisure hours in gambling, drinking, and every form of amusement devised by their desperately wicked hearts.

"During this time I had several remarkable escapes. Once I was delivered from drowning, when the long reeds were entwined around my body in deep water, and prevented my swimming. Another time I well nigh perished in crossing a vast desert. Another time pistols were loaded, and blood-thirsty men sought my life. Another time Mexican bayonets were pointed at my breast. Yet another time a terrible disease laid hold upon me, and so hopeless did my case appear, that my comrades put me down under the shelter of a tree, and felt so sure that my hours were numbered, that they began to prepare my grave near by, into which it was their purpose to cast my



poor, emaciated body when the spark of life had fled.

"I shall never forget the horrors of that situation as I seemed to feel life ebbing away, and the dread *hereafter*, even *eternity*, looming upon my benighted soul. So weak did I become that the weight of a grasshopper seemed a burden, and all desire to fail. So weak, that the pale horse, with *death* for its rider, seemed to overshadow me, ready to trample me into the bottomless pit prepared for the wicked, and those who, like me, had lived only for sinful pleasure, and '*forgotten God*.' There I lay, without one ray of Gospel hope to cheer my guilty soul, but only a 'certain looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.' There I lay, a wreck in the prime of life, and to all appearances drifting fast from the shores of time toward that vast ocean known as *eternity*, for whose dark expanse I had no chart or pilot to guide me."

Truly did one poet say—

"How dreadful to drift on a horrible shore,  
Where breakers of ruin eternally roar!  
Oh, mercy! To wreck in the morning of days,  
To die, while life dazzles in changeable rays.  
To sink, with the grovelling and vile of the ship,  
With the rose on my cheek, and the dew on my lip."

Such a prospect was indeed awful to contemplate on that Californian prairie. But, what will my readers say of *The Sinner's Burial*, pourtrayed with such solemn pathos in the following lines of Dr. Horatius Bonar:

Wrapt in a Christless shroud,  
He sleeps the Christless sleep;  
Above him, the eternal cloud,  
Beneath, the fiery deep.  
Laid in a Christless tomb,  
Where, bound in felon's chain,  
He waits the terror of his doom,  
The judgment, and the pain.  
O, Christless shroud, how cold!  
How dark, O Christless tomb!  
O, grief that never can grow cold!  
O, endless, hopeless doom!  
O, Christless sleep, how sad!

What waking shalt thou know?  
For thee no star, no dawning glad,  
Only the lasting woe.  
To rocks and hills, in vain  
Shall be the sinner's call;  
O, day of wrath, and death, and  
pain  
The lost soul's funeral!  
O, Christless soul awake,  
Ere thy last sleep begin!  
O, Christ, the sleepers' slumbers  
break,  
Burst thou the bonds of sin.

Dear reader, let me ask you not to dismiss this with the idea that it refers only to hardened and degraded sinners, such as the character whose history we are now reviewing. If you will carefully read such Scriptures as Romans, you will find that God declares that "*there is no difference.*" That *all* are "*in the same condemnation.*" "There is none righteous; no, not one. They are *all* gone out of the way; they are *together* become unprofitable; there is *none* that doeth good; no, *not one.*" "Now we know, that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law that *every mouth* may be stopped, and *all the world may become guilty before God.*" Therefore, whether we have been moral and circumspect in our past lives, or utterly depraved, the Divine words are applicable to all:

"YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN."

For, if we "die in our sins," there is no other prospect before us but "the blackness of darkness for ever," and eternal separation from God referred to in that other most solemn poem entitled:

"THE REMORSE OF A LOST SOUL."

"Woe is me, for I'm benighted,  
Will this gloom no more be lighted,  
By one ray of blessed sunlight,  
Such as cheered in days of yore?  
Will no dawn be ever waking?  
Not the faintest glimmer breaking  
The impenetrable darkness  
Of this awful, awful shore?  
Shall I see them nevermore?  
Echo answers—Nevermore!

"Oh, the racking, burning anguish,  
If I could but faint and languish  
Into sweet annihilation,  
And endure this pain no more.  
Even death seems from me flying,  
Mocking all my groaning, crying,  
Tauntingly he doth remind me,

How I fled from him before;  
Now I call him, he evades me,  
Will he strike me, nevermore?  
Echo answers—Nevermore!  
"When I lived in yonder region,  
Friends I had, their name was  
legion;  
In the awful pit of darkness,  
I their faces see no more.  
But their doleful lamentations,  
And blasphemous execrations,  
Make these awful vaults of hades,  
Still more dreadful than before;  
I, their awful doom have hastened,  
Must I hear them evermore?  
Echo answers—Evermore!  
"Memory, like an adder stingeth  
All the wasted past upbringeth;

"If I could this viper strangle,  
 Half my misery would be o'er.  
 But around my heart it coileth,  
 All my frantic efforts foileth;  
 'Tis the worm that never dieth,  
 Gnawing at my bosom's core;  
 Is there—Is there no deliverance?  
 Will it quit me, nevermore?  
 Echo answers—Nevermore!

"To my month, my tongue is  
 cleaving,  
 Not one drop my thirst relieving,  
 Of the copious, cooling water,  
 I so freely drank of yore. [sion,  
 Oh! If God would grant permis-  
 For one brief hour's intermission  
 From the awful, burning torture,  
 'Till His mercy I'd employ;  
 'Day of mercy,' gone for ever,  
 Will it reach me nevermore?  
 Echo answers—Nevermore!

"Even if the Great Eternal,  
 Bid me quit this gulf infernal;  
 Gave me leave through space to  
 wander,

'Till I stood at heaven's door.  
 Still in there I would not enter,  
 For the Christ, who is the centre,  
 Round whom all the saved ones  
 gather,  
 Whom they worship and adore,  
 Is the one I spurned, rejected,  
 When I lived on yonder shore,  
 He would spurn me from His door.

"As the slain Lamb I refused  
 Him,  
 When He spoke in love, abused  
 Him;  
 Lion now of Tribe of Judah,  
 I would flee His face before.  
 Sure, the sight of Him would  
 blast me,  
 Self-condemned, at once would  
 cast me,  
 Back into the abyss of demons,  
 Here to wallow evermore.  
 Farewell, all that's good and  
 holy,  
 I shall see thee nevermore.  
 Echo answers—Nevermore!"

As we ponder over such awfully solemn reflections as these, we can surely appreciate the words "*Who hath saved us from so great a death?*" "Even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come." Remembering also that "the wages of sin is death," shall we not unceasingly praise our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who tasted death for every man." "Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." "Who, His own self, bore our sins in His own body on the tree." "By whose stripes ye were healed." Thus we see how our adorable Lord "died the just for the unjust," endured upon the cross the full penalty due to our sins, and, having thus glorified God, opened the way by which "He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Let believers, therefore, never cease to praise God for His "unspeakable gift," and let *unbelievers* ponder over the great question, "How shall we escape if we neglect so

great salvation?" And heed the warning words in Job. xxxvi. 18, "Because there is wrath, beware, lest He take thee away with His stroke, then a great ransom cannot deliver thee." But the awful reality of that *eternal punishment* shall be fully realised by the Christ-rejecting souls.

### "THE PALE HORSE, WITH DEATH FOR ITS RIDER."

We left the subject of our narrative lying under a tree upon the Californian prairie with the terrible prospect of passing away from this time-scene into *eternity*. Thoughts of the solemn issues involved in this, pressed with deep reality upon his guilty soul. He seemed to realise the awful force of God's Word that declares, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after death the judgment." "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, . . . and whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."

Describing that terrible experience, the CONVERTED ACTOR said:

"As I lay upon that grassy couch, apparently on the eve of death, my soul trembled as an exercised conscience suggested the question, 'Where will you go when the end comes?' Then the scenes of my past life rushed with fearful imagery through my mind. I thought of the home I had deserted, of the mother's heart I had broken, the talents I had abused, the grace of God which I had despised and rejected. And then I thought of the just retribution of the wicked, and of the awful *eternity* when impenitent sinners, such as myself, shall *reap* 'for ever and ever' what they have *sown* in time.

"In the bitterness of despair I cried to God for mercy,

and proved again that 'the grace of God was exceeding abundant.' For I was not cut off in my sins, but, contrary to all expectations, I recovered from that terrible illness, and was enabled to pursue my journey. You will doubtless suppose that such

'A MONUMENT OF MERCY,'

who was looked upon '*as a resurrection man*,' would have abandoned his evil ways, and turned to the Lord. But no! Religious impressions gradually passed away, and with restored health this prodigal went back 'like the dog to his vomit.'"

How this should teach us that "salvation is of the Lord," and that nothing less than faith in the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ, resulting in "Conversion to God," and the "Regeneration of the Holy Spirit," can avail poor sinful men to save them from the penalty and power of their sins. It was *the Gospel of God* which was His "power unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus," that transformed the lives of those profligate pagans referred to in Rom. I—III., and made them "new creatures in Christ Jesus." And until men are thus *saved*, they are "led captive by the devil at his will," and have to learn that the "flesh profiteth nothing," but the words of Christ, "they are spirit, and they are life," and that those who are by nature "dead in trespasses and in sins," "hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live," see John v. 25.

Continuing his narrative, John Hambleton said:—"As we journeyed into the interior of that Californian state we were constantly exploring for gold, and at last settled down in a valley that afforded us good prospects of profitable yields of the precious metal, upon which our sordid hearts were set.

"Amidst the excitement of that adventurous life, sur-

rounded by men of desperate character and reckless habits, can you wonder to hear that our evenings were spent in the drinking saloon, gambling and gaming without fear of God or man ? ”

### A CRISIS IN THE PRODIGAL'S HISTORY.

Being injured by one, and deceived by another, he tells us that Satan tempted him to shoot the offender. To this end he adjourned to his tent, and there prepared his revolver with a deadly determination to use it upon his adversary. “But,” said he, “as I thought upon the possible issue of this terrible business, and that I might add *murder* to my other crimes, or, perhaps, be launched into eternity myself, with the accumulated sins of a godless life upon my soul, all the horrors of that dreadful position seemed to stare me in the face, and cause me to stagger, and discharge my pistol into the earth. No doubt but that I was a slave of the devil, and he was urging me to a sinner’s awful doom. But my mother’s prayers were recorded in heaven, and I felt a power working to restrain me, and some invisible helper seemed to be at hand, controlling my will, and thwarting my evil plans.

“I remember well,” said he, “how at that critical point in my life’s history I was constrained to fall upon my knees and lean my head upon a camp stool, weighed down under a sense of guilt and despair. A moment afterwards, when I looked up, my eyes rested upon a song book that had been thrown upon the floor. Without any particular object I opened it, and at once had my attention arrested by one word—FLY ! Strange as it may now seem, this became as a leading string in the wonderful providence of God that helped to draw me from a place of certain death to the home of my childhood. When its work was done it was taken away, and I was led by the

Spirit of God to seek His *light* and *truth* in that precious *Book of Books* which He has given to be 'a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path.' Without delay I fled from that Sodom of a miner's encampment, and made the strange resolution that I would '*go home and be religious.*'

"In making my escape from the slavery of sin, Satan seemed again to dog my footsteps, and to stir up the bloodhounds of hell to follow me in hot pursuit. At Apaculco, a Mexican settlement upon the coast of Panama, the American steamer became crowded with a rowdy lot of passengers who were returning from the Western gold-fields to the Eastern states.

"Calling at the above-named port, several of our party went ashore, in company with myself. The evil passions in our 'deceitful and desperately wicked hearts' were soon found rioting in sinful pursuits. This involved us in a drinking row, which brought Mexican soldiers down upon us. Two of our party were felled to the ground, and I found myself with three bayonets pointed to my breast, and then I was arrested and lodged in prison. No doubt the enemy of my soul thought that he had another hold of his slave, but thank God that HE who had began a good work in my soul again brought about my deliverance through the captain's gracious interference, who paid a fine, and secured my release, so that I was able to resume my journey to the United States of America, where I was transferred into another steamer, which brought me across the broad Atlantic, and landed me in Liverpool on the 1st of April, 1857.

"It seemed *a strange coincidence* that my feet should thus touch the land of my childhood after seventeen years of prodigal life on

ALL FOOL'S DAY.

It certainly suggested a prayer and confession which I

voluntarily offered: 'As a fool I have climbed the ladder of folly all my days. Now, O Lord God, do Thou give me understanding, and make me wise from this time to know Thee, so that from this hour my soul may climb the ladder which Jacob saw, whose top reached up to heaven.' That prayer may have lacked intelligence, but it was sincere, and God, in His infinite mercy, heard and answered my despairing cry.

"My first care was to search for my relations. At last I found my sisters, who received me with Christian joy. But I learnt that my poor old mother's earthly tabernacle had been *dissolved*, and that the Lord had called her redeemed spirit 'up higher,' where there is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore. She had 'departed to be with Christ,' which was far better. Her Christian name was Hannah, and my sisters told me how, that like her namesake in the Bible, she had evidenced implicit faith in 'the promises of God,' assured that he would graciously give her, in His own good time, the answer to her many prayers.

"Like the worthies of old, 'she died in faith,' not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and was persuaded and embraced them. Nothing could shake her confidence in *the faithfulness* of her covenant-keeping God, whose promises were, 'Unto you and your children.' Therefore, she told her daughters to take a sheet of paper, and write upon it a clear declaration of her dying faith—viz., that God would, in His infinite mercy, convert her prodigal son John, and bring him back to England that he might there become '*a preacher of the Gospel.*'

"Surely this is another instance of *the strong consolation*, which is the portion of all who have fled to Jesus for refuge, and prove Him to be 'a refuge and strength.' Yea, 'A present help in time of trouble.'"



## WANDERING ABOUT LIKE AN UNBLESSED SPIRIT.

In describing his experience during the first few weeks after his return to England, John Hambleton often used the above expression, which gives some idea of the distress of his *sin-sick soul*.

He said of that time: "My first resolution was '*to be religious*,' but, like others, I found this to be very toilsome work, because I was really wasting my energies in 'going about to establish my own righteousness,' and *thus* refusing to 'submit myself unto the righteousness of God,' which is the only way of escape from the penalty of sin, and entrance into the life and liberty, the joy and peace of God's great salvation. 'By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.'"

Said he: "I was repeating the folly of which the Jews were guilty when they asked Jesus, 'What shall we do to work the works of God?' Ignorant of the fact stated in Christ's answer to that important question, 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him, whom He hath sent.'"

Surely in every age and in every land "man's way" has given evidence of his folly in repeating the error of our first parents who tried to cover their nakedness with *fig leaf aprons* (even their own works of righteousness) rather than to avail ourselves of the provision made in God's sovereign grace, *typified in those coats of skin*, which told of "Redemption through His blood; even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace," and that Divine Righteousness, which is "Unto all, and upon all them that believe."

Paul confessed to having fallen into the same fatal error when he abandoned all efforts to obtain justification, or

standing before God, *in his own righteousness which is of the law*. But, casting away all such *dead works* as "filthy rags," and "offal to the dogs!" he desired to be "justified freely by God's grace," and "to be found in Christ," clothed upon with "the righteousness which is of God by faith."

Would that *religionists* in Christendom had even now learnt this great truth that God's plan of salvation is summed up in the word **DONE**, telling of the perfect work of Redemption accomplished by Christ upon Calvary's cross. In contradistinction to vain man's delusive efforts to "appease God" by any works of righteousness that he may attempt to do.

A pointed narrative is told of a young man, under deep conviction of sin, seeking counsel from several Christians, who failed to help him in his trouble.

At last he came to an aged servant of God, whom he told of his sense of guilt and despair, then asked him imploringly to tell him what he could do to get rid of the burden of sin, and possess the peace and joy of God's salvation. With a solemn look the old Christian replied, "Young man, you are too late! Too late!"

With increased despair he said, "Oh, is it possible that I have waited until the day of grace is ended, until the door of mercy is shut?"

"No!" said the aged pilgrim, "I am glad to say

'The door of mercy's open still,  
And Jesus cries whoever will,  
By Me may enter in;  
I am the door, and I have died,  
Salvation's door to open wide,  
For sinners dead in sin.'

But, young man, you are too late to do anything, for 1800 years ago God proved that man was 'without strength,' and, therefore, 'Christ died for the ungodly.' He entered

heaven through His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption for us. Therefore, God's Gospel declares man's guilt, helplessness, and ruin, and the fact that our adorable Lord *finished* the work which God gave him to do, and, therefore, He now declares His readiness, 'for His righteousness sake,' to save, pardon, and justify 'freely by His grace,' all who come to Him in their helplessness and need, and believe the testimony concerning 'the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ,' as set forth in Rom. iii. x. ; 1 Cor. xv., etc."

When this convicted sinner thus saw and believed in his heart that Christ had been lifted up on the cross, "that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life," he realised the forgiveness of sins (see Acts xiii. 38, 39), and went on his way rejoicing.

We are constrained to narrate these facts, assured that God will use them to show *some anxious soul* His way of salvation and peace, and that we are not called to WORK FOR our clothing as sinners, but we WORK WHEN we are *clothed* with divine righteousness, according to Phil. iii.

### A VISIT TO MODERN BABYLON.

With the arrow of conviction rankling in his soul, John Hambleton tried to get relief to his burdened spirit by visiting some relations, after which he took a trip to the gay metropolis of these British Isles.

Here the tempter tried to draw him into the vast whirl of excitement which filled the public mind in connection with the GREAT EXHIBITION, which was opened on May 1 1857. This vast WORLD'S FAIR brought together men of science, art, commerce, manufacture, and philosophy from every part of the earth.

What a contrast all this grandeur presented to one who had just come from the wild west of America. But the

World's fair in London, and the World's Fair in California, had everything in common to the sin-burdened spirit of this storm-tossed soul. Neither of them could satisfy his longings, nor minister peace to his troubled spirit, for all such *beds* are "shorter than a man can stretch himself on," and their coverlets are too narrow to wrap in. So that Solomon's verdict of vanity upon all that is "Under the Sun" (see Eccl. I.) is still true in everyone's experience. And sooner might the dying whale escape with the harpoons securely fastened into its side, then the wounded soul be dazzled by the baubles of this poor perishing world, whose pleasures only "endure for a season."

Eternity was ever present before the vision of his soul. Therefore, by the Divine Light which was now shining into his dark heart, he saw that "weighed in God's scales," the gorgeous display of London's treasures were "altogether lighter than vanity." And all this glitter was only a phase of Great Babylon, with masses of people worshipping the works of their own hands in forgetfulness of the claims of God as Creator and Redeemer.

Down through its streets this convicted sinner wandered, unable to appreciate its glory and display. By-and-bye he entered a book shop, and there

PURCHASED A BIBLE,

which he commenced to read in his lodgings.

The threatenings of God's holy law made him tremble, for he knew that he had broken its every command, and, therefore, its curse and penalty were his terrible doom. How true are the words—

"When free grace awoke me, with light from on high,  
Then legal fears shook me; I trembled to die;  
No refuge, no safety, in self could I see,  
Jehovah, T'sidkenu, my Saviour must be."

Returning to Liverpool, the conflict seemed to deepen in his soul. By day he roamed about the suburbs of that great city, and by night he walked the streets in anguish of mind. Then he would retire to his room, and sit alone for hours reading the Bible. Sometimes he would get gleams of comfort from its pages, but all the time he was listening to the dictates of his deceitful and desperately wicked heart, which led him to look *within* for certain *feelings*, and occupied with such questions as

#### HAVE I REPENTED ENOUGH?

and *thus* regarding *this* as "a title" to God's salvation, rather than the fact that his guilt, ruin, and need rendered him a fit subject for divine mercy, according to Rom. III. v. x.; Phil. iii.; Titus iii.

How slow we are thus to "submit ourselves to the righteousness of God," and to say—

"And take me as I am;  
My only plea, Christ died for me,  
And take me as I am."

Let it not be supposed that by dwelling thus upon this long and sad experience which John Hambleton passed through in "The Slough of despond," that we mean to suggest that a similar ordeal is essential to all. Doubtless all must come to *the end of self*, and learn that we are condemned already—lost and guilty sinners, whose only hope of salvation is "By Grace through Faith," and not of ourselves; it is the "Gift of God." That "all the fitness he requireth is to feel our need of Him." That just as soon as we realise that we are *bankrupt sinners* who have *nothing to pay*, God is ready to "justify us freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

Through ignorance of "the Gospel of the grace of God," this poor storm-tossed soul was thus groping about in darkness until it brought him to

## THE VERGE OF SELF-DESTRUCTION,

so that he said it seemed as if "the pains of death had got hold upon him."

Hearing of the *unpardonable sin*, Satan suggested that he was guilty of it, and therefore his doom was sealed, so that he felt as if a red-hot bar was in his breast. Then the adversary whispered that a glass of poison would be sweet, and put an end to this anguish of his sin-burdened spirit. But he was mercifully preserved from such a course of folly, and had his thoughts turned again to the precious "Word of God," the entrance of which brings light into dark and sin-burdened souls, and which is *spirit* and *life* when received by faith. He was led to see that "he that listeneth to his own heart is a fool," and that by heeding its suggestions, he was disregarding the precious "comfort of the Scriptures," which contained God's revelation of mercy and salvation through *the finished work of Christ to whosoever believeth on Him*.

Turning, therefore, to his Bible, John Hambleton read in John iii. of *God's great love* to the world of sinner's lost and ruined by the fall. He saw, by faith, the import of those words, "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth on Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." And as, like the publican of Luke xviii. 13, he realised his need and guilt, and turned his soul towards that uplifted Sin-Bearer, "who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree," he realised that "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from *all sin*." That God now says to all who believe in Christ Jesus, "Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more." And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye cannot be justified by the law of Moses." He was able to rest his weary soul upon the words of

Christ, who said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life." John v. 24.

This became as a *sheet anchor* to his soul, and he knew what it was to be thus *born again*, "By the word of God that liveth and abideth for ever." See 1. Peter i. 23, 25; James i. 18; Gal. iii. 26; iv. 6; Rom. viii. 15-17. He saw from the word of God that his *eternal security* rested upon the solid foundation of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the value of which was revealed to his soul by the Holy Spirit, through the Scriptures of truth, which now became "sweeter than honey to his taste, and better than thousands of silver and gold."

After this, he often remarked how much of Satan's time must be occupied in piling up rubbish to *hide* the Lamb of God from the gaze of sinners, and the risen Lord Jesus Christ as the High Priest and advocate of His redeemed people.

In preaching the Gospel of the grace of God, THE CONVERTED ACTOR delighted to represent (upon the authority of the Scriptures) that God is READY to save and READY to pardon sinners who realise that they are READY to *perish*, and to warn them against "Doubting Castle," "The Slough of Despond," or any place or experience which kept an anxious soul from coming direct to Christ, and believing the testimony concerning Him, according to John xx. 31; 1. John v. 9-13.

Having thus taken the guilty sinner's place, and believed on the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," he realised the truth of the following precious lines.

Then, at once, the peace of pardon, Did my sinking soul restore, And the lovesprung up spontaneous, Which I could not force before.	When I took the place of SINNER, And at Mercy's footstool lay; Jesus took His place as SAVIOUR, And at once took sin away.
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Ah ! 'tis ruinous to cover, Filthy sores with rags more foul ; Let us strip them bare before Him, That His grace may make us whole.	He delights in showing mercy, To the soul that owns its SIN ; But the soul that thinks of EARNING, Not a smile shall ever win.
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### SAVED AND SATISFIED.

Having thus passed out of the kingdom of Satan, and into the kingdom of God's dear Son, he began to realise the liberty, joy, peace, and privilege of the Christian's standing in the true grace of God, as set forth in the New Testament Scriptures, and to rejoice in that he was "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." True indeed were the words spoken by Moses of old concerning the Lord's people, "Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency, and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places."

This wondrous change from the *sinner's* condition in *Adam*, by *nature*; into the position of a *justified believer*, or Christian, is well described in the following pathetic lines:

Out of the distance, and darkness so deep, Out of the settled and perilous sleep, Out of the region and shadow of death, Out of its foul and pestilent breath, Out of the bondage and wearing of chains, Out of companionship ever with stains. Into the light and glory of God, Into the holiest, made clean by His blood, Into His arms, the embrace and the kiss, Into the scene of ineffable bliss, Into the quiet and infinite calm, Into the place of the song and the psalm.	Wonderful love, that has wrought all for me, Wonderful work, that has thus set me free, Wonderful ground, upon which I have come, Wonderful tenderness, welcoming home. Out of disaster and ruin complete, Out of the struggle and dreary defeat ; Out of my sorrow, and bondage, and shame, Out of the evils too fearful to name ; Out of my guilt, and the criminal's doom, Out of the dreading, and terror, and gloom.
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Into the scene of forgiveness and rest,	Out of the hardness of heart and of will,
Into inheritance with all the blest ;	Out of the longings that nothing could fill.
Into a righteous and permanent peace,	Into communion with Father and Son,
Into the grandest and fullest release ;	Into the sharing of all that Christ won ;
Into the comfort without an alloy,	Into the ecstasies full to the brim,
Into a perfect and confident joy.	Into the sharing of all things with Him ;
Wonderful holiness bringing to light !	Into Christ Jesus, there ever to dwell,
Wonderful grace, putting all out of sight !	Into more blessing than tongue can e'er tell.
Wonderful lowliness, draining my cup !	Wonderful Person, whose face I'll behold !
Wonderful purpose, that ne'er gave me up !	Wonderful story, there all to be told,
Out of the horror of being alone,	Wonderful, all the dread way that He trod,
Out, and for ever, of being my own ;	Wonderful end, that HE BROUGHT ME TO GOD.
Out of the bitterness, madness, and strife,	
Out of myself, and all I called <i>life</i> ;	

How beautiful it is thus to "apprehend that for which we have been apprehended" (see Phil. iii.), and learn the full purposes of God in relation to our redemption and salvation, as set forth in the Epistles.

That we have not only been delivered from the penalty of our sins, but the same grace that saves us, *teaches us* "that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world looking for that blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity,\* and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Such are the purposes of God, as set forth in the Epistle to Titus, to which is added, "That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life ;" being also "careful to maintain good works." "Ready to every good work," seeking grace to "*walk* so as to please God." Yea ; "that Christ shall be

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\*Literally all lawlessness and self-will.

magnified in my body." "That the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." Remembering His words, "Ye are My witnesses," and also the Master's teaching, "If ye continue in My words, then are ye My Disciples indeed."

Surely we ought to re-echo our Lord's commission, "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

When converted to God, John Hambleton's great desire was to become a true disciple of Christ, conforming to the precepts and examples of the word of God, in keeping of which "there is great reward." As he had found light for his dark soul with peace, joy, and deliverance from the power of sin and Satan through reading the Bible, so he began his experience as a new-born babe by "feeding upon the sincere milk of the Word," and *thus* he grew in grace, and in the knowledge of God, and found that it fully equipped him for every good work (see II. Tim. iii. iv.).

Often assailed by Satan, "the adversary," he found that, like our Lord, when similarly *tempted*, the safest course was to use "The Shield of Faith" wherewith to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. So that when, through the lonely watches of many a night his spirit was assailed by the devil, he would answer, it is written, "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Also "it is God that justifieth." "Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

His delight was to turn to such Scriptures as John iii. 14, 18; v. 24; vi. 47; x. 27, 28; xx. 30, 41; Acts x. 42, 45; xiii. 32, 39; Rom. iii. v. x; Heb. ix. x.; I. John v. 13; &c., &c., and therefrom to insist—that the Eternal Security of all believers was settled by the unaltering word of God;

that the finished work of Christ, yea, that eternal redemption which He accomplished for us upon the cross, was our True Ground of safety, and standing before God as justified and righteous; that our assurance of this depended upon a simple faith in the word of God, whereupon we "have the witness of the Spirit" that we are born again. Also that our enjoyment of all those spiritual blessings which divine grace has conferred upon us, depends upon our walking in the communion of the Holy Spirit, living in practical obedience to the whole word of God. Showing thus the essential difference between the *Christian relationship* to God which depends entirely upon the new birth, and his *communion*, which is affected by behaviour, "walking in the Spirit," as set forth in Col. iii., Gal. iv., v., Rom. vi., &c. The former is Eternal Life resulting from the work of Christ for us. The latter from the work of the Holy Spirit in us."

That indulged sin, and disobedience to God's holy word, involve the loss of joy and peace and enjoyment of God's salvation, which broken link of *communion* can only be restored by that confession of sin to our Heavenly Father, as taught in I. John i. ii.; Psalm xxxii. li., &c. But the link of "eternal life" can never be broken, as set forth in Rom. iii. v., &c.

The apprehension of these important truths proved of great value to THE CONVERTED ACTOR, and he often dwelt upon them in his public ministry for the benefit of others.

Thus he proved, as Paul did, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me." "My grace is sufficient for thee," and his happy testimony, after years of trial in "the pathway of faith" was, "Having obtained help from God, I continue unto this day." "Thanks be unto God who always causeth us to triumph in Christ."

From the verge of self-destruction this storm-tossed soul

was delivered, and brought into the life and liberty of God's great salvation, which he beautifully expressed in the following lines :

Depth of death my Saviour suffered, Deepest, deep, soul agony ; God's own spotless Lamb was offered, Willing sacrifice for me. Precious Saviour, Love has drawn my heart to Thee. When in helplessness I wandered, Lost and dead in sin and shame ; Life, and health, and substance squandered,	None to save till Jesus came ; Precious Saviour, Oh ! that all might learn Thy Name.  Now, Thy resurrection glory, Teach me, Lord, to comprehend ; While redeemed ones tell the story, Of the sinner's dying Friend ; Precious Saviour, May I love Thee without end.
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## CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCES AND TESTIMONY OF THE CONVERTED ACTOR.

Believing that it will be for general profit and interest to our readers, we are constrained to pursue somewhat further the narrative of the Lord's dealings with this monument of His grace and mercy, especially that we may learn some of the secrets of his power and success.

First, we have noted how thoroughly he was *converted* to God ; then *consecrated* himself to His service ; and was also *sanctified* by His Spirit and word of truth. At the very outset he seemed to have realised what it was to be "Redeemed unto God." So that "Ye are not your own ; for ye are bought with a price ; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's," became a maxim that regulated his life. Little wonder then that he saw Ichabod written upon all things "under the sun," and learnt the meaning of the words : "For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead ;" and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." 2 Cor. 5. Further, he learnt from Rom. xiv. how

that "Christ both died, rose, and revived, that he might be Lord," &c. He learnt, not only that Jesus Christ was his Saviour, Redeemer, Shepherd, Priest, Example, and Hope, but also "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord." Therefore, he began and continued his Christian life by praying "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" and "Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art God."

How sad it is that these great truths are being lost sight of, and Christians failing so sadly to conform to all things taught in the word of God. Too often thinking that such principles and practices pertain to very pious and advanced Christians, rather than to *all* who are "Children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." But John Hambleton began and continued his Christian life in the spirit of true subjection to the revealed will of his new Lord, assured that "No man can serve two masters," and that the friendship of the world is enmity with God. No wonder then that, like one of old, it could be said of him, "In every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered."

This is surely another secret of true success in every sphere of Christian work, and accords with Paul's noble desire, "Wherefore we are ambitious, that, whether present or absent, we may be well pleasing to Him." "Workman approved unto God, that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Desiring, above all things, that the Master might hereafter say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

If he found himself walking a narrow path, and unable to associate himself with some of the practices that have been adopted in the religious world, on the ground of expediency, he would console himself with his Master's

teaching and example, which includes the great principle that "To obey is better than sacrifice; and to hearken than the fat of rams."

He knew that "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation;" that what it accomplished in profligate Rome, it would still accomplish, if preached "in the demonstration of the Spirit and power." Therefore, he relied solely upon *this unction*, and not upon any kind of external display or tactics. Well do we remember the real power of God that accompanied his preaching, leading sinners to "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

### TRIALS OF FAITH

Frequently fell to his lot; for he says: "All my gold was lost in a desire to help an ungodly brother. My sisters and I were also in delicate health and circumstances of need. The question then had to be faced as to how we were to get bread. I was ready to labour with my hands; but at first my body was unequal to much manual labour, and we had no earthly friends to assist us. I remembered how God had answered my mother's prayers, proving that 'He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him;' so that, 'In my distress, I called upon the Lord, and He heard my prayer,' since which I have constantly proved the reality of that promise: 'My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory, by Christ Jesus.' The devil tempted me to go back to my theatrical profession, if only to get temporary relief, but I saw how entirely God's call and salvation had separated me from the world and all its sinful ways, and that I had still Jehovah-jireh to reckon upon, and I can bear testimony to the fact that 'His faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds,' and 'those who trust in the Lord shall never be confounded.'"

During a long period of his evangelistic labours in the British Isles, he kept a diary of his movements, with an account of all moneys he received, and it is but right to record it here, that I have perused this precious record of care bestowed upon His servant by the covenant keeping God, in sending gifts to him from churches and individuals in all parts of the world ; so that he gratefully closed up this testimony of nearly forty years' service, with the words, "I have lacked nothing." And yet he had no income from any society, but looked to God alone for support, never making any collections for the hire or maintenance of public hall, Bible-carriages, or his own personal expenses ; because he gloried in the statement made by the apostle Paul, "I have preached to you the gospel of God freely," and also "without charge" (see 2 Cor. xi., 7 ; 1 Cor. ix., 18 ; and 3 John, 7.) : "Therefore, for His name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles."

Surely these things should be noted "to the glory of God." For there is something striking in the fact that this man who, in his unconverted days, had managed a theatre in Australia, and earned as much as eighty pounds per week in the Californian gold diggings, should abandon all this for the trials and suffering of "a life of faith in the Son of God."

Do we look for the secret of this ? Surely it was "the unsearchable riches of Christ," and the prospect of "a better country," and that "city which hath foundations," which led Abraham to sojourn in a strange country, and also led Moses to "choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

Like these worthies, he had plenty of opportunities to have returned to the world; but the gold dust of El-Dorado, and excitement of the theatre, had lost all charm for the heart that had received Christ and eternal Salvation, with the earnest of an eternal inheritance. Faith saw that all the world's pleasures were but "vanity and vexation of spirit"; that:

"Its gold shall waste and wear away,  
Its honours perish in a day."

But the Christian soul

"My portion never can decay;  
Christ for me!"

Without waiting for any college training, or human appointment, this Spirit-taught man sought counsel from the Lord Jesus Christ, through a prayerful study of the Scriptures of truth. Great was his reverence for that Sacred Book, which had made him "Wise unto Salvation"; but he further learnt that it "made wise the simple," "rejoiced the heart," "enlightened the eyes," warned God's servants, and proved "a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path," as set forth in Ps. xix., cxix.; so that it regulated every department of his life, and "thoroughly furnished him unto every good work."

Like the Thessalonian believers, who are referred to as a Model Church, John Hambleton became "a follower, or imitator of Christ; and of the Apostles," commended for "Work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ; and sounding out the word of the Lord far and wide"(see 1 Thess. i. 3. 8. 9.) He also "became a Follower, or Imitator of the Churches of God," as stated 1 Thess. ii. 14. He learnt that consistent *collective testimony* was incumbent upon Christians, as well as their *individual testimony*. That the test of true spirituality was, according to 1 Cor. xiv.



39., our acknowledgment that "the things which I write unto you," *i.e.*, instruction relating to the constitution, gathering together, ordinances, ministry, worship, government, service, testimony, and, hope of God's Churches, as formed by the Holy Spirit, "Are the Commandments of the Lord," therefore, not matters for our option or amendment, remembering what God said to Moses: "See that thou make all things according to the pattern given to thee in the Mount;" and remembering also that, in the building together of saints into assemblies, or churches, God had constituted Paul "a wise master builder," who had to conform to the pattern of God's Churches, which were to be founded and built in accord with the Master's precepts, which permit of no variation. The scope of this book will not permit (except in appendix form) of any enlargement upon this most profitable, but much neglected, subject. The word of God instructed this true-hearted disciple of Christ as to the blessedness of returning to "the old paths" of gathering to the adorable Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and being satisfied to be known by "that Beautiful Name," by which the early disciples of our Lord were called, *viz.*, Christians, otherwise known as believers, brethren, saints of God. Often did curious people ask the evangelist, "To what church do you belong?" And invariably would he answer, "I belong only to the Church of God, and of 'the first-born, whose names are written in heaven;'" and he would then puzzle his enquirers by handing them his Bible, inviting them to show him any directions there for founding churches with sectarian names, creeds and barriers that separate God's redeemed people, who ought to be manifesting "the unity of the Spirit," as set forth in Eph. ii., iii., iv. Thus he sought fellowship with those assemblies that were gathered to the Lord's name, and

aimed at carrying out the precepts and practices, ministry, and ordinances of the early Christian Church.

With a large heart he sought grace to walk in the narrow path of divine statutes and ordinances, holding forth the Word of Life, and Holding Fast the Faithful Word, always insisting that it was our magna-charter and sole appeal in every matter. So that where differences and difficulties arose, he would always appeal to

### “THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY,”

forming his estimates of things “according to the balance of the sanctuary,” *i.e.*, its conformity, or otherwise, to the Scriptures of truth. Thus he became known as The Man of the Bible; and was sometimes referred to by the thoughtless and indifferent as “Mr. Chapter and Verse,” because he would insist upon having this authority for all that was said and done in the service of God. Asked once where he had acquired such wonderful acquaintance with the Scriptures, that enabled him to confound infidels, Romanists, and the many forms of opposition to the truth that he met with in open-air preaching, theatres, &c., he replied, “God exalteth by His power, who teacheth like Him.”

Thus it is that, throughout his public ministry, he was a proof of the great principle unfolded in Isa. xxviii.: “God doth instruct him to discretion, and teach him . . . This also cometh from the Lord of Hosts who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.” His remarkable history also going to prove that “God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things that are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.”

Soon after his conversion, and whilst employed at Liverpool Docks, God exercised his heart about the masses of unsaved people around him, and *the constraining love of Christ* made him feel that he was "A Debtor to All," according to the sentiments expressed by the Apostle Paul in Rom. i., x.: He felt that "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel."

The fact that he could say, "I believe," led him further to say, "Therefore have I spoken." Referring to his early experience as an open-air preacher in Liverpool, he said, "At the first my knees trembled, like Jeremiah; but God directed me to His word, saying, 'Thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee; and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee, to deliver thee.'"

Thus he went forth in the Lord's service, in simple dependence upon Him who had promised to supply all the need of His redeemed people; and day by day, and year by year, he proved the sufficiency of divine grace to meet every need. Assisted by Edward Usher, who proved a true yoke-fellow in the Gospel, John Hambleton hired the Teutonic Hall, in Liverpool, for Evangelistic services, where a band of Christian workers soon gathered under the banner of Jesus only. In this place rich and poor were brought under the power of the Gospel, and convicted and converted to God.

Men wearing gold chains were to be seen alongside of thieves and profligates, all exercised about their common danger and need, as guilty, hell-deserving sinners. Blessed, indeed, was the service of the Spirit-taught preachers, who reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come; so that men and women were led to cry: "What must I do to be saved?" and pointed to

"the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world," and hundreds were thus saved by grace, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. From Liverpool John Hambleton was led to visit the manufacturing towns of Lancashire, in company with Edward Usher, and afterwards with that honoured servant of Christ, Henry Moorhouse, whose faithful ministry and deep insight into the Holy Scriptures was afterwards so much valued by Mr. Moody.

As opportunities occurred, these devoted servants of the Lord went to fairs, races, and markets, with banners inscribed with Scripture texts, preaching the Gospel of God and distributing tracts, as the Spirit led them. They also hired public halls and theatres, using every opportunity to declare the glad tidings of God's great salvation to perishing sinners.

### RICHARD WEAVER'S CONVERSION.

Whilst labouring in the Gospel in Manchester and the neighbouring villages, John Hambleton and his companion, Edward Usher, met Richard Weaver, who had recently been converted, and still followed his work as a collier, near Hyde. Believing that this man had a special gift from God for Gospel testimony, John Hambleton prayed for him to be guided as to giving his time fully to the Lord's evangelistic work.

A visit from Mr. Reginald Ratcliffe led to further prayer and conference upon this subject, and finally Richard Weaver saw that God had called him to this work; so that he acted in faith, giving up his situation in the coal pit, and going from place to place, as the Holy Spirit led him, to proclaim "the Gospel of God." And thus the heart of our friend was gladdened in seeing other labourers thrust out into the great harvest field.

## BIBLE CARRIAGE WORK.

From the dirty and noisy towns inhabited by cotton factory workers, John Hambleton visited the fashionable watering place of Blackpool. About this time he was provided by Christian friends with a Bible carriage, which he made good use of for many years, for the sale of the Holy Scriptures, and preaching from its platform "the old, old story" of God's love to the world of sinners lost, and ruined by the fall.

The writer has heard the testimony of ladies and gentlemen of education and refinement, who have said that they received deep-soul impressions of their guilt and need as lost and hell-deserving sinners from the earnest ministry of John Hambleton, whose fervid spirit gave intense emphasis to the preaching, concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment to come; the apprehension of which leads people to avail themselves of "the Gospel of your salvation."

There is no doubt but that there is a great need of this in the lukewarm and shallow times that we are now living in, when preachers are overlooking "repentance toward God," who has laid the axe at the root of every tree in the old creation. The need increases for earnest and simple testimony as to man's ruin, and God's remedy.

Often have I heard "the Converted Actor" preach upon these themes, until sinners were made to tremble under the power of the truth, and rich and poor were led to exclaim: "What must I do to be saved?"

Passing through most of the large towns in the Midland counties, and preaching in each as opportunities occurred, John Hambleton reached the Metropolis, where his diary tells a little of those many tokens of God's providential care and help that he so delights to record. His first trial was to find suitable lodgings, and then to recover his Bible-

carriage, which had been lost in transit. During these anxious wanderings he found himself near

### KING'S CROSS,

where he noticed a crowd of people gathered around an old man, who was reading the Scriptures and exhorting Christians to take up the cross and follow Jesus. A scoffer in the crowd asked him if he wanted them to take up the stone cross in the middle of the road? Seeing that the old man was not equal to the contest with these revilers, "the Converted Actor" stepped forward, and asked permission to answer this infidel. Whereupon he said, "Yes, friends, it is the King's cross which the King's servants are exhorted to carry during 'the little while' that our Master is despised and rejected of men. But I fear that you are not the King's servants, but rather His enemies. Therefore, I preach to you 'the ministry of reconciliation,' beseeching you to be reconciled to God now, in this 'day of His grace,' or else you will be 'punished with everlasting destruction from His presence,' when Jesus comes again, and treads the wicked as ashes under the soles of His feet, in the coming 'Day of the vengeance of our God.' I don't tell you 'to bear your cross,'" said John Hambleton, "for every unbeliever is 'without strength,' and 'dead in trespasses and sins.' Therefore, the first thing for you to do is to 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,' and *then* when you are saved, you are called upon to 'take up your cross daily,' and follow that Blessed One outside the camp, bearing His reproach in this world, that rejecteth Him still."

As "the Converted Actor" thus commenced preaching, the crowd became attentive, and listened respectfully as he proceeded to tell them of the love of Christ, that passeth knowledge, which led Him to bear His cross outside the city of Jerusalem, to the Place of a Skull, where they

crucified the Lord of Glory. Quoting from 1 Cor. i., he boldly asked, "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God; it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." He boldly declared that he was not ashamed of that Gospel, and that, after spending long years in the devil's service, he now was the servant of Jesus Christ, "determined to know nothing among men, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

Turning to the scoffers in the crowd; he reminded them that it was to carry out the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, that our Lord was crucified at

### "THE PLACE OF A SKULL."

That its significance was the fact that it was *the end of man in the flesh*; the close of his probationary history after 4,000 years of trial under conscience, promise, law, long-suffering, government, and grace, under all of which the Adam race had been "tried and found wanting." Therefore, God had laid the axe at the root of every tree in nature's forest, and required "a new creation," a birth from above, before any man could "enter the kingdom of heaven." He pointed out how the title, which Pilate wrote upon the cross of Jesus Christ, was "written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin," significant of the fact that *the religion, the wisdom, and power of this world*, were all arrayed against our God and His Christ. So that "the place of a skull" gave evidence of the complete ruin of sinful man; the enmity against God of the carnal mind; the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of man's heart, who was now "condemned already," and shut up to salvation from the penalty of his sins, through the Redemption accom-

polished by the one offering of Christ, upon Calvary's cross.

He then spoke of "the path that no fowl knoweth ; which the vulture's eye of human wisdom has not seen, the lion's whelps have not trodden, nor the fierce lion passed it by." But, as set forth in Job xxviii. 12 ; 1 Cor. i., ii. ; true wisdom is found in man taking the place of a fool, that he may be wise, by the revelation of God, the Holy Spirit, to his dark soul, of Christ, as an all-sufficient Saviour. Therefore, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the rich man glory in his riches ; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth ; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." Jer. xi., 23. But how true it is still, that "Vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt," and also, "God hath hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes," and that true wisdom and life eternal is, "that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."

In this manner John Hambleton was accustomed to "reason out of the Scriptures," and silence the opposition of cavillers. There can be no doubt but that for

### OPEN-AIR PREACHING,

a special gift is required, similar to that evidenced by our friend, "the Converted Actor." First, there must be the knowledge of our salvation, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, with the witness of the Spirit that we are born of God. Then we need to be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, and also with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and to be walking in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. So that our souls are filled with His joy and peace ; and



out of full hearts we preach the Gospel of the Grace of God, and the unsearchable riches of Christ. To this end there is need of such prayerful study of the Bible, that may enable rightly to divide its teaching, and "to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." Therefore, like the apostles, we should learn to "reason out of the Scriptures," so that we may *mightily convince* the gainsayers.

I shall never forget occasions when I have listened to this devoted servant of Christ, preaching in the streets, and answering infidels, Roman Catholics, and every form of opposition to the Gospel of God; and turning to advantage every question and interruption, so as to put to shame the adversaries of the truth. It reminds me of a very good and suggestive narrative I once heard of another evangelist, who, when preaching in the open-air, was reviled by a band of scoffers, who asked him a lot of questions. Turning upon them at last, he claimed the liberty of putting a question to them; and did so by asking:

#### "WHY IS THE DEVIL LIKE A PAWNBROKER?"

Some laughed; but all were puzzled, and admitted that they could not solve the riddle. He thereupon told them that it was "Because he claimed as his property all that was not redeemed," and then showed them, from the Word of God, that all mankind were "sold under sin," the servants of Satan (Rom. vi. 16.); led captive by the devil (1 John v. 19), and that God's Gospel was the good news, that Christ gave Himself a ransom for all (1 Tim. ii. 6), consequent upon which, and His having redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us (Gal. iii. 13), God now says, "Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom" (Job xxxiii. 28).

But all who will not believe this Gospel, and avail themselves of "so great salvation," will have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

He proved from the Scriptures that there is no other ground upon which God can meet guilty and rebellious sinners than Redemption, through the blood of the Lamb; whereby believers "are justified from all things." But if men reject this gracious provision of God, they will for all eternity be the lawful property of the devil, to whom they have sold themselves to do evil.

On another occasion an open-air preacher was told that he was well paid. "Yes," said another, "he gets half-a-crown for the job." "No," replied God's servant, "I am promised a whole crown of glory, that fadeth not away. God does not recompense us with *half-crowns*." But the best weapon to use in open-air preaching is "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;" and our friend, John Hambleton, was remarkably apt in this.

## EVANGELISTIC WORK IN THE SOUTH OF ENGLAND.

For some time he laboured in London and its suburbs with the Bible-carriage, and then visited Portsmouth and Southsea, where he was saddened by the indifference of the people toward the Gospel of their salvation.

Whilst praying for guidance as to future service, the Spirit of God seemed to say to him, "Go your way to the villages over against you." He, therefore, took an ample supply of Bibles and Gospel books, and crossed over to Ryde, on the Isle of Wight. In a few hours his stock was exhausted, and he saw "the hand of the Lord" guiding him to labour there. A Christian family offered him hospitality, so that he spent three months in happy

service for his Master in this fashionable watering place.

Referring to this in his diary, he expresses the conviction that eternity will reveal much precious fruit from the Gospel testimony given there.

On Sunday evenings very large crowds of visitors were accustomed to stand upon the parade, near the Pier Hotel, and listened to the solemn, earnest tones of "the Converted Actor," as his voice pealed forth The Old, Old Story of God's love to this sinful world. On one occasion the Grand Duke Constantine, brother of the Emperor of Russia, sat with his window open, listening for three-quarters of an hour to an address given by our friend, upon the words in Rev. xx. 2.: "I saw a Great White Throne." He records the fact that he felt peculiar power in preaching that evening to the assembled crowd, and showing from John v. 27, xii. 41; Acts xvii. 41, &c., that the occupant of that Throne would be the glorified Son of Man, to whom God has committed authority, that He may execute judgment upon all who have neglected, or rejected, His Great Salvation (see also 2 Thess. i. 7, 8; Acts xiii. 38, 41; John iii. 36).

In further labours amongst the villages upon the Isle of Wight, and also North and South Devon, John Hambleton was greatly pleased with the simple faith and readiness with which these people listened to the word of God, as compared with the indifference that he met with in some other places.

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## VARIOUS INCIDENTS IN GOSPEL WORK.

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During his early experiences in open-air work, Hambleton had many narrow escapes from the fury of angry mobs. On one occasion in Liverpool they shouted so as to drown the preacher's voice. He, therefore, held up his open Bible, saying, "This book will judge you in the last day if you will not listen to its message of mercy." A man in the crowd set fire to a tract, and held the burning paper alongside the open Bible in the preacher's hand. This brought about a silence, as they expected to see a blaze. But God prevented any harm to the book or evangelist; and a man came forward, broken down under conviction of sin, and told the preacher that this sight had brought to his memory a scene in his past life when his guilty soul had well nigh been launched into a drunkard's grave. Falling asleep near a burning furnace whilst he was intoxicated, he lost all consciousness, and let his hand fall into the fire until it was burnt. So that this poor wretched, armless man now acknowledged the mercy of God in sparing his life, and was led to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour, and was, in a double sense, "a brand plucked from the burning."

### THE PRODIGAL SON.

The **CONVERTED ACTOR** very often referred to the distinct guidance of the Holy Spirit, both in his movements to different spheres of service, and also in subjects given to him for ministry of God's Word. In his diary he refers to a time when he was speaking in the open-air at Liverpool, and all at once his mind was directed to Luke xv., from which he commenced to read and speak of the prodigal son. After the meeting, a big, rough man came forward, and, accompanying them to a prayer-meeting, fell on his knees, and cried to God for mercy. In about twenty minutes the convicted sinner was led to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoice in the pardon, peace, and liberty of a justified one. Then he desired to bear witness of the work of grace in his soul, and all marvelled at the change wrought in the drunken, wife-beating ruffian, who became a local preacher, and a consistent Christian, whose wife and family ever blessed God for the change which He had wrought.

### ONE OF JESUS' MEN.

Of old, the apostles rejoiced in being counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name's Sake, and John Hambleton, like other true servants of their Master, proved that the reproach of the cross had not ceased, and that true Christians are still hated of all nations for His Name's-sake. Passing the **CONVERTED ACTOR** as he was preaching near a race course, one shouted at him derisively, "There is one of Jesus' men."

"Yes," said John, "by the grace of God I am, and more proud of that title, than I should be of any that this poor world could offer me." Like Moses of old, "he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Just then a butterfly flew past, and the sight of this spoke to the heart of God's servant, telling him of "resurrection life," and what "an eternal weight of glory" will be the portion of all believers who "endure as seeing Him who is invisible."

## PREACHING ON RACE COURSES.

Always ready to preach that Gospel which had brought life, and joy, and peace to his own soul, Hambleton was often found in circumstances of great peril, especially when he attended race-courses for this purpose. Describing a time of bitter hostility from a mob of degraded men led on by an Irish Roman Catholic, the evangelist offered to let him come on the platform if he would answer a question. This excited some curiosity, and although the man did not relish being put into this position, this tool of Satan was persuaded by his comrades to take the preacher's place, whereupon he asked him in solemn tones, "Why did Cain murder his brother Abel?" There was something in this question that seemed to touch the man's conscience, and paralyze his tongue, for he stood for a moment silent and confused, and then rushed from the platform a convicted sinner, and thus afforded the preacher an opportunity of answering the question himself, and showing the difference between the religion of Cain and that of Abel, and that our only chance of salvation is to take the guilty sinner's place, and be "justified freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

## THE CONTROVERSIAL COLLIER.

This reminds me of a similar incident in my own experience. Travelling in South Wales, I was accosted in a railway carriage by a very assumptuous young man, who was evidently under the influence of strong drink. After some boastful remarks about the dignity of man, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, to which I made no response, he turned to me and said: "I suppose you think yourself better than me because I am only a working man?" "Not at all," I replied. "For all that I am, or ever shall be, I owe to the grace of God, which *alone* makes me to differ from you. So that pride and boasting is excluded." "Look here," said he, "if I have taken a drop too much I am not a bad fellow, and I reckon I know a thing or two if I am only a working collier." I replied that we were all, by nature, so incurably bad that we could not be made any better, and, therefore, must be born again, else we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven; and that, as to knowledge, it was very cheap, and that many who were acquainted with books, and what was going on in the world, were ignorant of God. I reminded him of Jer. ix. 23: "Let him that glorieth, glory in this—that he understandeth and knoweth Me." Also, "This is life Eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou has sent." I therefore asked this *knowing man* what he knew about the Lord Jesus Christ? "Law," said he, "if I am only a collier, I daresay I know as much about the Bible as you do." "Quite possible," I said, "but I am not talking about *knowing the Bible*, for that knowledge is also cheap enough now. But do you know the Person to whom every part of the Bible directs you? For does it not say, at the end of the Gospels, 'These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through His Name?' Do you know Him as your Saviour from the wrath to come?" "Why, of course, I know all about Jesus and the Christian religion," said he. "What do you take me to be?" I again dwelt on the great fact that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," such as we all were by nature and practice. "Not a bit of it," said this poor deluded man. "I don't know what you are, but I object to be called a sinner, for I reckon I am as good as most men in the Rhondda Valley." I replied that my remarks did not refer to what he was in his

moral life, or relation to his family or neighbours, or employer, but to God, who said "all have sinned," &c., and "All the world is guilty before God."

Thereupon his anger was aroused, and the spirit of Cain very soon manifested.

"Look here," said he, "if I am only a working man, and a bit top-heavy now, I reckon I am quite as good as you are, for no policeman ever laid his hands on me." "That may be so," I replied, "but Christ said to a religious man, 'You must be born again,' and the Apostle Paul, who had led a blameless life, according to Phil. iii., said he was 'the chief of sinners,' and I have taken the same place that God may 'justify me freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.' By nature I was a hell-deserving sinner, but 'by grace I am saved, through faith, and that not of myself, it is the gift of God.'" "Stop," said the collier, "you are mistaken if you think I am a bad man, for I was in chapel last night." "Well, and what did you do there?" "I really could not tell you," he said. "Just tell me the text?" "Well, I am not sure of that," he replied, "but 'twas somewhere in Luke, but the preacher rambled all over the shop in his sermon." I remarked that there are some beautiful things in Luke's Gospel, and as he had just boasted of his knowledge of the Bible, I asked him to kindly tell me what was said in Luke xv. about a certain young man with a remarkable history? "Aye," said the collier, "you mean that young fellow called Nebuchadnezzar, don't you?" "No," I said, "that was the name of the great Gentile king we read about in the book of Daniel. But what I refer to is the history of the Prodigal Son, which resembles all of us by nature, wandering from God in the broad road of folly, and seeking to do what is right in our own eyes, until we came to the end of ourselves, and turned to Him in true repentance and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

The collier fidgeted about as I thus sought to lead him to see his position and condition of danger and need as a sinner, for which the Gospel of God's grace was the only remedy.

Watching his chance to turn the conversation, he said, "You caught me just now about that young chap in Luke xv., but it is my turn now, and I reckon I can give you a poser. Tell me," said he, with a knowing look, "Who was Cain's wife?"

I replied that I was not one of those who pretended to be wise above what God had written. That my knowledge of such things was limited to what the Bible told me. But as God said nothing about Cain's wife, and a great deal about his brother, I thought that the history of the latter concerned us more than vain speculations about the former. I then tried to show him the difference between God's estimate of the religion of these two men, and that his religion was *the way of Cain*, which practically denied his lost and ruined condition as a sinner by nature and practice, and, therefore, needing redemption, regeneration, and reconciliation, through the Atoning sacrifice. Whereas, like Abel, I availed myself of God's provision for covering my sins, even the precious blood of Christ, of which the slain lamb was but a typical foreshadowing, and, therefore, Abel and I were "justified by faith," on the ground of that sacrifice which "perfects for ever them that are sanctified."

I sought to show this poor deluded man the folly of debating questions that were of but little moment to one who would soon have to pass into eternity, and how much better it was to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. But this poor slave of Satan seemed quite satisfied to

feed upon the husks of sin, whilst he despised and neglected "so great salvation."

I record the fact as suggestive of the better course to pursue when we are thrown in contact with scorners, who profess to seek wisdom, but find it not, because they have never been to "the place of a skull" and seen the end of man in the flesh, and that all we can know of these divine verities must be by the revelation of the Holy Spirit to our souls.

We believe that the secret of John Hambleton's power in silencing the opposition of these scoffers, was his "laying the axe at the root of the tree," and seeking to lead them to the cross of Christ, where they might see their own vileness, and the grace of God that had made full provision for their deepest need.

### DERBY DAY EXPERIENCES.

On another occasion John Hambleton stood on the road to Epsom, at a point where he could be seen and heard by the crowds of pleasure seekers who passed to the races. Holding up a large Gospel text, he told them how busy Satan was in seeking to ruin their souls by the pleasures of sin, which only endure for a season, and lead to forgetfulness of God and eternal realities. A block occurred in the road in front of the little platform from which our friend was speaking. In one of the carriages that were thus brought to a standstill was a clergyman who seemed enraged at having to listen to such faithful preaching. He therefore tried to rebuke John by saying, "You only cause the enemies of our Lord to blaspheme by all this preaching on the Derby day." The CONVERTED ACTOR turned upon his reverend assailant, and said, "You talk about our Lord and our Saviour? Pray tell me what has Jesus saved you from?" Receiving no answer, the evangelist went on to tell them that when he was converted, God turned him around, and changed the whole course of his life and ways, separating him from horse-racing, and all such evil associations, against which he was now called to be a witness. He then proved, from the Holy Scriptures, that the salvation of God involved the believer's sanctification as well as justification. That it not only delivers our souls from the wrath to come, but "if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away, and all things have become new." That converted men and women are called upon to "set their affection upon things above, not on things of the earth," and "to walk as Christ walked." That this involved "separation from the world," and all its vain pleasures, doing all things "to the glory of God."

### OPPOSITION TO THE TRUTH.

On another occasion a band of ruffians were paid by some gentlemen on the Grand Stand of a race-course to disturb the meeting where John Hambleton was "holding forth the Word of Life," and he and his co-workers were being subjected to very rough usage, when the CONVERTED ACTOR rushed upon the stage, leaping and praising God as he shouted "Stand still, and see the salvation of God." The mob thought he must have gone mad, and his strange antics served to divert their attention for a few moments until some policemen arrived and escorted our friend and his comrades off the course, singing hymns and praising God "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name." So bitter was the opposition to the truth that one day he found a Gospel preacher on the race-course covered with flour, which the enemies of God had been throwing over him, with all the filth they

could find. Yet the grace of God enabled this man to continue his testimony of warning sinners that they were hastening down to hell, and unless they were converted to God, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, they would spend eternity where there was "weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth," and there would be no races, nor drinking saloons, to break the monotony of despair. Even after his persecutors had taken away his coat, this devoted Gosseller went on warning sinners to "flee from the wrath to come."

### THE DEVIL'S FOOL MADE MORE FOOLISH.

When our friend was preaching at a fair, a determined effort was made by the owners of a certain show to divert the people's attention. To effect this, they sent a clown with painted face, and clad in most fantastic attire, to mock everything said and done. Seeing a Christian giving away tracts near the platform, this clown followed him, giving away his own playbills. John Hambleton watched his opportunity, and when a goodly crowd were in front of him, he shouted, "Look here, friends, and you will see two fools, one for the devil, and the other for Christ! God made man in His own image, but look at that poor fellow there, and see what Satan has done for him. By God's grace I am a free and happy man, serving a good Master, but that poor man is serving the devil, and will only get 'the wages of sin, which is death.' Yet the God he mocks sent His Son to die on the cross to save sinners from eternal punishment, and I am here to declare to you the glad tidings that there is 'forgiveness of sin' for all who believe in His most blessed Name." The clown slunk away in confusion, but later in the day sought the Converted Actor, and begged for an interest in his prayers, for, said he, "I am wretched in my quiet moments."

### THE INFIDEL'S QUESTION ANSWERED.

Speaking once in a market-square, a notorious infidel came in front of him, and commenced asking a lot of blasphemous questions. Lifting up his heart to God in silent prayer, the evangelist looked this man full in the face, and in solemn tones, said, "The Lord rebuke thee, Satan." This seemed to stagger the man who had hoped to draw him into argument. Without condescending to answer his questions, the preacher once more said, "The Lord, even the Son of God, rebuke thee, thou servant of the devil." This quite staggered and silenced the infidel, whereupon Hambleton set about his great business of preaching the Gospel to the enormous concourse of people that had assembled, and the Lord's Name was glorified by the testimony.

### CONVERSION OF AN OLD INFIDEL.

In one of the suburbs of Manchester there lived an old shoemaker who was a terror to all who knew his great powers of argument, and extraordinary fluency of language. Originally educated for a Roman Catholic priest, this unhappy man had given up all faith in revelation, and plunged into the darkest mazes of infidelity. Denouncing the mass, confession, absolution, and purgatory, as priestly lies to get money out of their dupes, he would hold up all religion as a sham, because he knew nothing of the beauties of Christ Jesus our Saviour and Lord. After sailing about for years over the wide and dreary ocean of fleshly intellectuality, amidst the rocks, shoals, eddies, whirlpools, and quicksands of blind unbelief, driven and tossed about



at sea without rudder or compass, until the storms of strife and contention had caused him to shelter his now leaky timbers in a dingy room in back Pump Street, Manchester. Accompanied by a praying Christian, John Hambleton visited this man to speak to him of "The path which no fowl knoweth; which the vulture's eye hath not seen, nor the lion's whelps trodden it." His first object was to lead him to "the place of a skul," and show the emptiness and insufficiency of all that man is "in the flesh." That, "although vain man would be wise," he was yet, in God's sight, like "the wild ass's colt," with an undisciplined will, blinded by the devil, and led captive by the enemy of our souls, so that until those fowls, vultures, and lions of pride and unbelief cease from their own wisdom, they must wander about in darkness, and then be ushered into that land where darkness is eternal. These servants of the Lord remembered that God had chosen the foolish things to confound the wise, and weak things to confound the strong, so they trusted only in "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God," and preached unto him "Jesus only." Evidently the Spirit of God was operating in this dark mind, for he listened attentively as they "preached through Jesus the forgiveness of sins," showing how "grace reigns through righteousness," and that now "God is just, and yet the justifier of all who believe in His Son." As they commended all to the Lord in prayer at their departure, he invited them to call again. Some days later they did so, and found the poor old man "a new creature in Christ Jesus." He told them with sobs and tears of what God, in grace, had done for his soul. This seems to have been apprehended through an extraordinary vision he had the previous Sunday afternoon. Lying on his couch after dinner, he fell asleep, and then dreamed that he was wandering across a dreary desert surrounded by deep pits, and chasms dangerous to pass. Night came on, and a sensation of horror and despair seized him, so that he could neither proceed further, lest he should fall, and be dashed to pieces, nor retrace his steps. Whichever way he took seemed to involve certain destruction, which produced a feeling of intense alarm in his soul, leading him to exclaim, "I'm lost, I'm lost." At this moment a cross seemed to suspend over him in the air, and a glorious person came toward him with a look of infinite compassion on His face, and words of grace, mercy, and peace flowing from His lips as He took him by the hand, and gently led him through that dreary waste into a scene of unutterable bliss. Said he, "I turned to look at my guide, and saw there were nail-marks in His hands and feet, and knew it was Jesus of Nazareth, whom I had despised and rejected. What could I do, sirs," said the old man, "but fall at His feet and say, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners, my Creator and Redeemer.'" That dear old man thus confessed his faith in our blessed Lord, and it was a true joy to see him gather simply with the disciples of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ at "the breaking of bread" on the first day of the week, and join us in our worship on these happy occasions when we "remembered Him" at the Lord's table.

After this, cancer broke out in his tongue, and he had to suffer horrible pain whilst the doctor burned it out. But he was able to praise God that his blaspheming tongue, which had lectured on infidelity, was not burning in hell; but that mercy rejoiceth against judgment. After a consistent testimony, the Lord took this trophy of His grace home, to be with Himself, which is far better.

#### OTHER ENCOUNTERS WITH INFIDELS.

When preaching to a crowd at Whitehaven. John Hambleton spoke

solemnly upon the depravity and guilt of man, and insisted that there was no escape from the judgment of God, except by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Whereupon, an enraged infidel shouted out: "No! man is not depraved. The child coming into the world is like a clean sheet of paper, and may write its own character upon it for good or evil." John Hambleton said, "Bring your clean paper here, friend, and let us examine it. Do little children die as well as aged people?" "Yes." "Then why do they die if the paper is clean?" He could not answer, so the Converted Actor said, "Why, it is because they are born in sin, and 'the wages of sin is death,' so death and corruption in the child proves that your theory is false. Nevertheless, the blood of Jesus has atoned for sin, and His death pays the debt, and all who believe in Him go free." The infidel seemed confounded, when a poor Irishman shouted out: "Och! your sheet of paper is clean dirty;" and the persecutor retired discomfited. On another occasion another infidel rushed upon the evangelist and seized him by the collar, like a demon, and dashed the Bible on the floor, saying, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself preaching such stuff as this in the nineteenth century!" John Hambleton replied, "I truly am ashamed of myself; but God forbid that I should ever be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is His power unto salvation to all who believe it." Just then a strong man came forward, seized this ruffianly assailant, and dragged him out of the crowd, whilst three blind men, who were strolling through the fair, sang close to the platform,

"Down came the angel and rolled away the stone."

#### THE BIBLE-CARRIAGE IN BEDFORD MARKET.

On one occasion a determined effort was made to remove the Bible-van from the market, after the tolls were paid, and preachers had settled down to good work for their Master.

The police gave them notice that unless they removed all their belongings before five o'clock, they had orders from head-quarters to clear them out. John Hambleton arrived in time to see the town officials assembling, determined to stop their Gospel testimony, evidently instigated by some of the religious people of the town, who hated "the Gospel of the grace of God" as much as the Scribes and Pharisees did of old, who persuaded the people to demand the release of Barabbas, and crucify the Christ. Our friend then took up his position upon the steps of a drinking fountain in the market square; and in that voice of thunder, which so many of us can remember—declared that they were servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, and, therefore, respected every law of the land."

He demanded to know what offence they were charged with, and insisted that if the authorities were determined to remove God's Bible-van they must do so at their own risk, and refund him the tolls that had been paid. Without reason or parley, the officials gave orders to the police to remove the van to the cattle market, where there was then no concourse of people to address. Our friend, therefore, kept his place on the fountain steps, and for a considerable time preached the word with solemn power to an enormous crowd, who listened to this remarkable testimony. A Christian who was present tells us that he will never forget that scene; as "the Converted Actor" turned to his Bible-carriage and pointed out the precious name of Jesus, and the texts relating to His Salvation, which were painted thereupon. He declared that it was because they knew not God, believed not on His Son, and hated the truth, that they were thus persecuting His servants, who

had come to them, constrained by His love, to preach "the unsearchable riches of Christ." And he continued in solemn earnestness to preach "the whole counsel of God," in relation to "Salvation by grace through faith," as the only way of escape from the just judgment of God, which will speedily fall upon all this Babylonish religion, even though it be associated with the Name of Christ.

### YOU NEED THE BLOOD!

At the close of a Gospel Service, John Hambleton saw a poor woman weeping bitterly under conviction of sin. He approached her tenderly, and said, "You need the blood, the precious blood of Christ, that cleanseth from all sin." Being a man of few words under such circumstances, he passed on to deal with other anxious souls in the enquiry meeting. Some time after this, a woman came up to him with a radiant face, and confessed her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Said she, "After you delivered that short message to me in the Gospel Hall, I went home with the reality of my sinful state as a heavy burden upon my soul. The words kept ringing in my ears, 'You need the blood, you need the blood.' By-and-bye my mind was directed to the Scriptures, and I seemed to see the Lord Jesus upon Calvary's Cross, 'wounded for my transgressions, and bruised for my iniquities,' having all my sins laid, by God, upon Him. And as I gazed upon that wondrous scene, and heard His voice saying to my wounded conscience, 'I suffered this for thee,' the burden of my sins rolled away, and I began to sing 'Happy day.' Just at this time my poor father was at the point of death, and unconverted, so I told him the good news of my own salvation, that the assurance was given to me, on the authority of the Bible, that my sins were all forgiven, and that I had 'eternal life,' through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." He became at once deeply interested in these matters, and when God had made him feel his own sinful state, I told him that 'Nothing but the blood of Jesus' would avail to help him, or save his precious soul. It was not many days before he put his trust in Christ, and was rejoicing in the knowledge of his sins being forgiven. Soon after this my brother came home to see our father just before he died, and we lost no time in telling him that

"We had found the precious Christ of God.

Our hearts did sing for joy;

For, sing we must, this Christ we had,

A precious Christ have I.'

He could but be struck with 'the peace and joy in believing' that filled dear father's soul in the presence of death, and it soon impressed him with the reality of our faith in the blessed Lord, and the changes wrought in our souls by the Holy Spirit, when we gave up the mere formalism of religious observances, and built our hopes upon Christ alone. Ere long, my brother was also led to believe in Christ, and to confess Him as Lord. And thus," said she, "all three of us are rejoicing together in the knowledge of our salvation by the remission of our sins."

### A MAGDALEN RECONCILED TO HER PARENTS THROUGH THE MEDIATION OF THE CONVERTED ACTOR.

Returning from a Gospel service late one evening, in Liverpool, the attention of our friend was directed to a young woman standing for shelter in a doorway, and, prompted by that wondrous "compassion of God," which

is the great requisite for all Christian service, John Hambleton approached her, and enquired the cause of her sorrow. He found that she was troubling about her sinful course of life, and the grief this was to her parents. He therefore spoke to her of the "kindness and love of God," who sent His Son "to seek and save that which was lost." The poor girl then and there "believed the glad tidings," and was "truly converted to God." He took her to his sister's cottage, who welcomed her, until the next day, when she told them the sad history of her wanderings, and how she was the only child of kind parents, who were anxious to know her whereabouts. John Hambleton, therefore, decided to take her home at once. He first approached her father, but found him so enraged at her misconduct that he would not at first listen to any proposed reconciliation. He said that vexing on account of her evil ways, had nearly killed her mother, who was upstairs very ill. John Hambleton reminded him of the Saviour's words, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy," so that he finally agreed that our friend should see his dying wife. He began by talking to her of the words of Simeon, "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." Finding that she was a believer in Christ, and therefore saved, he asked if she was ready to depart? She told him that there was one desire she would like to have gratified first, and that was to see her only child, and know that she was walking in God's ways. Thereupon he broke the glad news of her recent salvation, and before many minutes passed, they were clasped in each other's arms and reconciled. But, less satisfactory results attended another case of a poor girl from the streets of Manchester, whom he took back to Oldham. Tears of sorrow fell from her face as she saw her poor afflicted mother sitting by the fireside. The father was reluctant to take her in, as he did not believe in her conversion. John Hambleton tried to hope that this was real godly sorrow. But a few weeks afterwards the poor father told him that she only stayed at home five days, and then returned to her old sinful ways. And not long after this that wretched young woman threw herself into a mill-pond, and was drowned in a fit of frenzy, and one fears that her poor soul was lost for all eternity, teaching us the need of "repentance toward God," and the failure of mere natural sorrow.

### WHAT IS THE GOSPEL ?

In his diary John Hambleton refers to the opposition he met with from Roman Catholics and infidels, who everywhere seemed to be animated by the same bitter hostility to the truth. But in some places his faithful testimony was also rejected by professed Protestants and religionists, who had little sympathy with his earnest preaching of "the Gospel of the Grace of God." At a fashionable watering-place he was assailed by a teetotal reformer, who asked him to substitute temperance for Gospel tracts, as he contended that the former was the best remedy for the evils that abound, and the latter had failed in its mission. He denied this, and contended that "the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation unto all that believe." That it had not failed, but was accomplishing God's gracious purpose of saving sinners, and calling such out of the world, as a separated people, to glorify His Name. The Teetotaler answered, "But is the world any better? Is there not more wretchedness, drunkenness, and vice now than ever?" "Yes, certainly," said John, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together, because 'sin reigns unto death, and man is a bonds slave of

Satan, led captive at his will.' What God said of Israel's moral condition in Isa. i. 5 is true to-day. 'The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores, they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.' Your teetotalism may help to improve men's circumstances, but it fails to touch the root of the disease, the desperate wickedness of the natural heart. It cannot heal those wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores which are the result of sin. That can only be met by redemption and regeneration. God says that 'Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse.' and that 'the last days' of this dispensation will be marked by more corruption and apostasy, so that Christians are not taught to try and make the world better, but to regard it as condemned to judgment, and preach the way of salvation from its doom." The teetotaler still contended that his temperance tracts were the best agency for elevating mankind. But the evangelist declared that God never intended to "mend the world," but to save sinners out of it, delivering them both from the penalty and power of their sins. He contended that it was entirely contrary to the Gospel of God that we should try to patch up the old garment of the corrupt Adam nature. For "that which is born of the flesh is flesh." Therefore, God's unalterable decree is, "You must be born again." And God's only remedy for man's total depravity and guilt is Redemption through Christ's blood. Justification by faith: and Regeneration by the Holy Spirit, apart from which all unbelievers "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of His power." "They that are in the flesh cannot please God," be they teetotalers or drunkards.

### THE TERCENTENARY OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

One characteristic of our friend John Hambleton was his abhorrence of man-worship, and his determination "to know nothing amongst men save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." Reading of the arrangements that were being made at Stratford-on-Avon to honour the memory of the great English play-writer, Hambleton determined to go to this carnival and witness for his Master. Whilst seeking divine guidance about this, his companion, Henry Moorhouse, cried out in his sleep,

CHRIST FOR ME;  
PRAISE THE LORD,  
MERCY'S FREE.

Whereupon the Converted Actor took this as a message from the Lord, and had it printed on large text-boards, which he and Moorhouse carried to Stratford, and held it before the crowd of sightseers, to whom they preached "Jesus only." But whilst the poor listened attentively to the Gospel, hundreds of professed teachers of the people went into playhouses with medals of Shakspeare on their breast, and bishops and clergy toasted each other at the banquet, while actors and actresses, harlots and infidels, were singing their mocking blasphemy in connection with a suffering Messiah in honour of a dead play-writer. Amidst all this anti-Christian man-worship, these two evangelists "held forth the word of life," and hundreds of true-believers joined them in shouting,

Christ for me;  
Praise the Lord,  
Mercy's free.

## THE CONVERTED ACTOR'S VISIT TO THE LONDON

## EXHIBITION OF 1862.

Whilst labouring in the Gospel at Liverpool, John Hambleton was deeply impressed with the fact that he ought to go to the above, and circulate some specially printed tracts, and exhibit two large texts, "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation unto all who believe it." And "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." With these texts lifted on boards, the evangelist walked around the great exhibition seven days, and as he finished his last round, a gust of wind broke the pole, and, feeling that this particular testimony committed to him was ended, he hung up the texts on some rails opposite the grand entrance, and left that scene of man's glorying in the works of his own hands, so utterly distasteful to this truly-separated witness for God, and went to Southampton for other work.

## THE OLD MAN ON HEREFORD BRIDGE.

Whilst he was serving the Lord in preaching the Gospel of His grace at Hereford, John Hambleton one day noticed an old man looking over the bridge into the swiftly gliding stream. Approaching him he said, "Friend, you and I must cross the river" (meaning the river of death). He answered, "Yes, sir, but what can a man do if he cannot swim?"

"Why, of course, he must sink," said the Converted Actor. The poor old man heaved a sigh as he leaned upon his staff. Thereupon our friend "preached, through Jesus, the forgiveness of sins, and told him how Jesus had tasted death for every man, and died the Just for the unjust." So that he had taken the sting from death, and opened the way to heaven for every sinner who is willing to be saved "by grace through faith," concerning whom the Lord Himself declares, "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24), and is "Made fit for the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. i. 12), because their sins have all been put away by the precious blood of Christ, which washed them down the tide of death, and He Himself has become "the bridge of hope," the mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus." All this was glad tidings to the poor, ignorant old man, who heard, believed, and was saved, and went on his way rejoicing.

## A DRAWING ROOM MEETING.

Not only was our friend used of God in the salvation of the poor, but many rich and learned were converted through his earnest, faithful preaching. During his visit to Ireland some Christians there invited a select company of ladies and gentlemen to a meeting in one of the mansions of Dublin. At this he commenced to speak with his accustomed plainness of the fact that all are, by nature and by practice, guilty and ruined sinners. That there is no difference as regards our state before God, and the danger of eternal judgment to which we are exposed, between the drunken and profligate men and women of our great cities, and those ladies and gentlemen who are "respectably and religiously going down to hell." Therefore

he insisted on his Master's doctrine, "You must be born again." A lady present was so shocked with this that she left the room, and afterwards expressed her disgust at such theology. Prayer was made that God the Holy Spirit would reveal to her the verities of God's righteousness, our ruin, the redemption in Christ Jesus, and the remission of sins through faith in His name. In a remarkable dream that night this lady thought she saw her own heart enlarged, and put into a glass case so that it might be inspected. Drawing near, she was amazed to see a crowd of ugly reptiles creeping in and out of a black heart. Each of these had a name engraven on its forehead. One was envy, another pride, another lust, and many such "works of the flesh." Over it was God's verdict, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart." Then underneath were the words, "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." She was thus convicted of the truth. Her faucied "comeliness was turned into corruption," and she had to exclaim, like Job, "Behold I am vile," and, like Isaiah, "Woe is me, for I am undone." Next day she was glad enough to seek the despised preacher (our friend John Hambleton), and ask, "What must I do to be saved?" Coming to God as a poor, guilty sinner, and believing that Christ died for her sins, and was raised for her justification, she at once realised the poet's words—

"When I took my placed as a sinner,  
And at mercy's footstool lay;  
Jesus took His place as Saviour,  
And at once put sin away."

Thus she realised the blessedness of Psalm xxxii., and Rom. v., and went on her way rejoicing in the knowledge of her salvation by the remission of sins.

### A REMARKABLE CASE.

One of the truest friends raised up by God to assist John Hambleton in his evangelistic work was the late Henry Reed, of Tasmania, who manifested the deepest interest in the welfare of our friend. As another instance of the wonderful ways of God, we may note here the leading points of the remarkable history of this devoted servant of Christ. Awakened to a sense of his guilt and danger during a voyage to England, when a terrific storm threatened to engulf the ship, and her passengers in a watery grave, Henry Reed then realised his position and condition as a sinner, who had to do with a righteous God, who had declared that "After death the judgment." Like Hambleton, Henry Reed had a praying mother, and though he had forsaken and forgotten her God, and spent his life in the scramble for riches and pleasure in Australia, yet he remembered her teaching and prayers as he lay sick and helpless in that awful storm off Cape Horn. In mercy the ship was spared, and reached England with this convicted sinner on board, as yet not saved, because he had not believed in his heart God's testimony concerning the finished work of Christ. After spending a pleasant time in England, he returned to Tasmania with good resolutions to serve God in the Colonies, forgetting the Saviour's words, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." Every kind of sin being rampant, he found no rest or peace in the distant land, and yet failed to learn that,

"Whate'er I need in Jesus dwells,  
And there it dwells for me."

So that, although in most affluent circumstances, his soul was like a storm-tossed petrel. Amidst luxury and all that kind friends could minister, there was ever

#### A SKELETON IN THE CUPBOARD.

So that the inspired words were verified: "A wounded conscience; who can bear it?" To get relief from this "burden of sin," he planned another trip to Christian England (so-called) in the hope that, by the aid of Christian ministers there, he might find "peace with God." Alas, that he should have failed to seek this at Calvary, where Christ "made peace by the blood of His cross." To facilitate his plans, Mr. Reed bought a good ship, and selected officers and crew who were total abstainers, non-smokers, and absolutely under his own command. They had religious services on board, and thus he hoped the voyage would afford him profit and pleasure. But he was deceived in the captain, who proved so unfit for the command, that Mr. Reed had to take charge of the ship himself, and managed to navigate her safely to England, where he wandered about from church to church, seeking rest for his heavy-laden soul. Without getting any relief to his spirit, he returned again to Tasmania "weary and worn and sad." And there, as he read the Scriptures, he learnt the A B C of the Gospel of God's salvation"—viz., "By grace are ye saved through grace, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." Previous to this he had read the Bible upon his knees, weeping and praying until large sores formed on his knees, compelling him to lean against the wall and cry to God for mercy. Yet all this time he was trying to merit salvation, and obtain it as a recompense for his prayers, alms, and tears, rather than accepting it as a gift, bestowed in sovereign grace, upon poor, helpless, bankrupt, guilty, hell-deserving sinners, who say—

"Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,  
O, Lamb of God, I come."

He was repeating the old folly of "Going about to establish his own righteousness," and thereby refusing to "submit himself to the righteousness of God," which is "Unto all, and upon all them that believe." Looking from self to his Redeemer, who "died for his sins, according to the Scriptures," Henry Reed saw how completely "the finished work of Christ" had met the claims of God in respect of sin. He believed the testimony concerning Him, and went on his way rejoicing. Henceforth he was a happy and useful Christian, who delighted to minister to the need of worthy servants of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We could multiply instances of the power of God displayed through the preaching of this devoted Gosseller, but our space is fully exhausted, so that we can only say that, after nearly thirty-five years of service for his Master in these British Isles, our friend was led to return to Australia, where he occupied the few last years of his life in circulating the Scriptures in Bal-



larat and Geelong, where, at a ripe old age, "he finished his course with joy," having "fought a good fight, and kept the faith."

We can only pray that these memoirs may glorify the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, leading sinners to believe in His Name, and saints to honour it by "walking as He walked," and then "observing all things which He has commanded."

To Him be the glory, great things hath He done,  
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son!  
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,  
And opened the life gate, that all may go in.

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Let the earth hear His voice,  
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Let the people rejoice!  
Oh come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,  
And give Him the glory! Great things He hath done!

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